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Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists FEBRUARY 1998

HE TRUTH ABOUT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION . MEMBERS MOBILIZE FOR RAPID RESPONSE

Ideas and Views From You

FULL-TIME WORK'S AN EYE-OPENER

@ "I am a 23-year-old student at the State University of New York College at Old Westbury. I was never really interested in the labor movement, and in fact, was not supportive of it. Once I started working full time, however, this attitude of mine changed. I finally realized why these union supporters fought the way they did. Workers have no power and are at the mercy of their employer, especially in a nonunion environment. Many things I witnessed at work were unfair if not illegal.

"This prompted me to refocus my education. I went back to college with a new major: industrial and labor relations. I would also suggest to any union members that many of your local colleges or universities offer...courses that could help you understand...labor-management relations. If you have an educated workforce, your union will be stronger."-Michael McArdle, Commack, N.Y.



"Congratulations on defeating Fast Track. The information available on LaborNet was really good.

"The most curious claim for Fast Track was 'leadership.' Without Fast Track, America could not be a world leader. The Fast-Trackers are confused. A leader is someone who takes people where they want to go. The old wagonmasters who guided wagon trains west were leaders. Because the public wanted nothing to do with Fast Track, organized labor provided the real national leadership on the issue."—Dean Farris, Carpenters Local 61, Grandview, Mo.

UNION RETIREES EAGER TO PITCH IN

@ "Please consider including some news of union retiree councils that are forming and whose members are eager to do local organizing and informational picketing where needed (also real picketing, where necessary). We are growing and eager to help."—Leon Shore, president-elect, and Joe Rauscher, president, Philadelphia Retirees Council; Marty Berger, president, Pennsylvania State Council

PLEASE NOTE:

America@work inadvertently omitted the Coalition of Labor Union Women as a source for pay equity information, 202-296-1200; fax: 202-783-4563 ("74¢ on the Dollar is Not Enough," December/January 1997-98).

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Telephane: 202-637-5010 Fax: 202-508-6908

E-mail: atwark@aflcia.arg Internet: http://www.aflcia.arg





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John J. Sweeney, President Richard L. Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer Linda Chavez-Thompson, Executive Vice President

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Say What?

What is your union doing to increase job safety and health and to provide workers with effective health and safety training?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

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"SAY WHAT?" RESPONSE

(a) "We are working every day to make sure that people are aware that we are against sweatshops. We held a demonstration late last year in the middle of town where everyone could see us to get the word out. We have written letters to Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), visited congressional officers and written letters to three local papers. We are just trying to spread the word any way that we can to buy

American manufactured goods." -Deanna Witte, UNITE Local 2363, Spencer, W. Va.

Donna M. Jablanski (Publications Director); Tula Cannell (Editor); Mike Hall, David Kameras, James B. Parks (Assistant Editors); Muriel H. Cooper, Arlee C. Green (Staff Writers). Design: The Magazine Group, Inc.

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Honoring the

ore than 500 union members from across the country honored the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. over the King holiday weekend by following his example: serving those in need. From Jan. 16-19, union members provided valuable assistance to human services agencies throughout the Memphis area

as part of the nationwide series of events marking the 30th anniversary of King's death. On Jan. 17, more than 1,000 union members in Memphis marched to the Civil Rights Museum to honor King's memory.

Operating out of the Communications Workers 10806 union hall, members delivered unionmade paper products to agencies across the area, including the Loving Arms Project, an AIDS outreach program that serves 93 families with 200 children. Also taking part in the multiunion effort was Paperworkers Region 7, which secured a major contribution of paper products; the Teamsters, which made special deliveries of the goods to Memphis; Amalgamated Transit Local 713, which provided transporta-

> tion for deliveries; and the UFCW, which provided lunches. Painters Local 49 and Carpenters Regional Council made repairs to city buildings.

The multiracial makeup of those taking part in the march and community service actions echoed King's message of equality and service, said Taylor Rogers, retired president of AFSCME Local 1733. "We'll all go up together or we'll all go down together," he said. The AFL-CIO Civil Rights and Human Rights Department, which sponsored the events, chose Memphis because King died there after traveling to that city to speak with 1,300 sanitation workers. The workers had voted to join AFSCME Local 1733 and were struggling to gain union recognition from the

orders Books & Music prides itself on the education and high skills of its workers—but the giant chain doesn't want to pay for those skills. At the same time the company is maintaining a five-year pay freeze in starting wages and reducing the number of full-time hours from 40 to 37.5. Borders CEO Robert DiRomauldo made \$23.8 million last year in salary and stock-surpassing even the CEOs of the Big Three automakers.

That's why Borders' workers across the country are trying to organize. As part of the campaign, union members handed out informational leaflets Dec. 1 to let the public know about employees' efforts to organize. Food and Commercial Workers Local 951 called for the national day of action to support its organizing efforts in Michigan. Other UFCW locals have won organizing drives in Chicago, New York City, Des Moines, Iowa and Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Recently, several dozen wellknown authors-including Norman Mailer, E. L. Doctorow and

Annie Dillardsigned a public letter backing the workers' fight.

While denying workers a living wage, the Borders chain, which has 202 stores around the country, is growing at a rate of 40 new stores per year.



Checking Out

Too often, elections are defined by the employer's power over the workers rather than by an employer's commitment to a fair election. Many employers use the long election process to erode union support.

recognition, voluntary recogni-

tion and community elections.

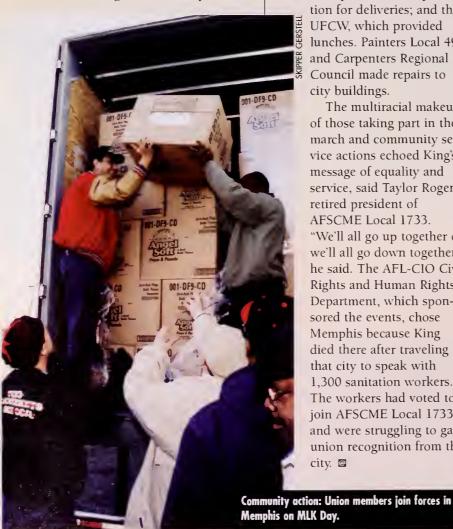
"We can't wait for labor laws to change or to get a better society," says Richard Bensinger, organizing director for the AFL-CIO. "It's up to us to change our approach to organizing."

In just one recent example,

hotel workers in Las Vegas won cardcheck recognition for more than 3,000 employees.

Call Bonnie Oakes at 800-848-3021 with information on all non-NLRB campaigns, or give her the name and number of a contact person the Organizing Department can call.

Not by the book: Workers at Borders Books & Music want an end to a five-year wage



SPOTLIGHT

ıltry Workers Form stice Coalition

orth Carolina is home to 24 poultry processing plants, employing 17,000 workers. rkers have filed hundreds of coms about unfair labor practices and and safety problems in the indus-Orkers repeatedly tell stories of denied bathroom breaks and being for getting injured. They also report ents of verbal abuse and sexual sment.

build support for poultry plant



rs and their

e for justice.

rters form a new

workers struggling for decent working conditions, contract poultry farmers, religious groups, labor unions and community leaders joined the workers to launch the North Carolina Poultry Justice Alliance during the Thanksgiving weekend. "We can't give thanks for food if we know that workers have been injured

ucing it, or know it has been prol in sweatshop conditions," said Mil-Bey, coordinator of the Poultry ers' Justice Project of the National faith Committee for Worker Justice. e alliance is seeking improved wages, fits and working conditions, the right ganize and bargain collectively as as improved enforcement of environal health and safety laws.

Payback (in Back Pay) For Beverly Workers

everly Enterprises has been ordered to reinstate—with back pay—the 500 workers it "permanently replaced" during a three-day unfair labor practice strike against 15 Pennsylvania nursing homes in 1996. Beverly committed dozens of unfair labor practices that "demonstrated a general disregard for the employees' fundamental rights," an NLRB administrative law judge ruled in late November.

ALJ Robert T. Wallace found that Beverly used an "array of coercive tactics such as blatant surveillance on union activities, threats of retaliation, suspension and discharge of union supporters, permanent replacement of unfair labor

Organizing Goal on EC Agenda

eeting Jan. 28-30 in Washington, D.C., AFL-CIO Executive Council members heard reports about the anti-worker political and legislative agenda unfolding across the country and discussed reaching an annual 3 percent net organizing goal.

New growth in organizing, especially at the local union level, maintained union membership at 12.9 million in 1997; eight unions, led by the American Federation of Teachers, met the goal of 3 percent growth. Also reaching 3 percent or higher: the AFA, IAM, Writers Guild, ALPA, PTE, School Administrators and the ILA.

Speaking at the meeting, Wei Jinsheng, a former Chinese political prisoner, received the George Meany Human Rights Award. Other guests included acting Asst. Attorney General Bill Lann Lee.

practice strikers and humiliation of those who were eventually recalled by assigning them to different shifts with curtailed working hours and benefits."

"This is another victory for nursing home workers everywhere whose rights to organize and protest are essential in an industry driven by profits and greed," says Tom DeBruin, president of SEIU District 1199P.



WELFARE

Workfare Reality

elfare reform rhetoric lags far behind workfare reality: The odds are 97-1 against a workfare worker finding a job that pays a living wage. And as welfare reform pushes people out of the system, there is only one job for every two job seekers, a new report reveals.

"Welfare Reform: The Jobs Aren't There" was released on the National Day of Action for Welfare/Workfare Justice Dec. 8, when thousands of labor, community and religious activists in more than 50 cities rallied and marched to demand respect and decent jobs for workfare workers. The report also includes a stateby-state breakdown documenting the lack of jobs and the severe impact of welfare reform. In fact, the odds against finding a job that pays enough to escape poverty (\$12,278 for a family of three) are an overwhelming 22-1.

For copies of the report, call JWJ at 202-434-1106.

Still Made in USA

ade in USA" will still mean just that, thanks to efforts by a coalition of dozens of labor, consumer, farm and business groups. Late last year, the Federal Trade Commission dropped plans that would have allowed products with 25 percent foreign content to display the "Made in USA" label, sticking instead with the current standard that products be "all or virtually all" made in this country.

"The FTC's decision to keep the 'Made in USA' label simple, honest and all-American is a tremendous victory for consumers and for American working men and women who proudly make their products here in the USA," says David Flory of the Made in USA

Coalition.

As a result of grassroots pressure, opposition to the move quickly blossomed into massive bipartisan resistance, with 226 House members cosponsoring legislation opposing the label change and Senate minority and majority leaders backing a similar bill.

Telling it like it is: Products with 25 percent foreign content will not bear the "Made in USA" label.



Currents

Justice on hold: Sprint workers are determined to keep battling for their iobs, despite an appeals court decision.

Justice Denied Sprint Workers

recent federal appeals court decision that denied justice to 177 Sprint employees is a classic example of how the deck is stacked against workers trying to organize. But the decision is not stopping the Communications Workers from singling out Sprint as one of the worst law-breaking, antiworker employers.

In 1994, Sprint closed its San Francisco telemarketing office, La Conexion Familiar—just eight days before a union election in which the mainly Latino workers were expected to vote for CWA.

But in December, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit bought the company's argument that Sprint shut the operation because it was losing millions of dollars each year, despite the fact that a Sprint vice president was caught falsifying records to support Sprint's economic claims.

In a previous ruling, the NLRB

cited Sprint for serious labor law violations, and ordered Sprint to pay back wages, benefits and interest to the workers, and offer them new jobs.

The company did not contest more than 50 charges of illegal behavior by its managers to keep workers from organizing, including intimidation by supervisors, surveillance of union supporters and outright threats to shut down the office if workers voted for the union.

The appeals court ruling "shattered the hopes of the...immigrants and their families who came to this country seeking the opportunity to better their lives by working at what they thought was one of America's premier corporations," says CWA President Morton Bahr.

for Joseph For JUSTICE The bill for

"Rather than pay the \$12 million and offer them other jobs, Sprint—a company that routinely spends hundreds of millions of dollars to advertise, sponsor golf tournaments and polish its image—has seen fit to keep its platoons of lawyers busy fighting these poor Latino workers," Bahr says.

ORGANIZING

AFGE Workers at the National Transportation Safety Board voted for Government Employees representation in December. The 270-person unit includes crash investigators and support and clerical staff. An internal organizing drive also brought in more than 1,000 new members including 395 workers at the VA Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn.; 240 workers at the Corpus Christi, Texas, Army depot; 200 Defense Finance and Accounting Service employees in Fort Sill, Okla.; 140 workers at the Portland, Ore., VA Medical Center; and 100 workers at the Farm Service Agency in North Dakota.

AFM The faculty of the New School's Mannes Jazz and Contemporary Music Program in New York City hit the right note when the educators voted to join Musicians Local 802. The local's effort at the New School is part of its Justice for Jazz Artists campaign (*America@work*, November 1997).

AFT More than 200 civilian instructors at the Great Lakes

Naval Training Center in North Chicago, Ill., voted to join Lake County Federation of Teachers Local 504. The instructors are employees of two contractors that slashed pay and benefits when they assumed the educational operations at the base in October.

AFSCME In its ongoing fight to organize mental health workers in Illinois, AFSCME Council 31 chalked up another win, this time for workers employed at Services Exchange in Cook, Dwight and Bradley counties, who voted 95–5 to join the union. The private company operates developmental training workshops and residential care facilities. Librarians in Hennepin County, Minn., voted 73–9 to join AFSCME in late November.

ALPA Pilots at Milwaukee-based Midwest Express voted for representation by the Air Line Pilots, with 121 pilots voting union and 97 choosing ALPA.

HERE Some 370 workers at Diplomat Parking's Washington, D.C., garages won card-check recognition and will be repre-

sented by Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 27. Other recent HERE wins include 176 workers at the Sheraton Atlantic City Convention Center Hotel and 130 workers at the Sheraton Four Points in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

IBEW At Davey Tree Surgery Co., IBEW Local 47 won card-check recognition in December for 70 workers who maintain and clear trees from power lines throughout southern California.

IBT Corrections workers at 14 facilities in the state of Washington cast their ballots for Teamsters' representation in December. Better pay and more full-time jobs were the main concerns of the 4,000 workers. Three hundred pilots and flight engineers at Air Transport International, a cargo and military passenger carrier based in Little Rock, Ark., also said yes to the Teamsters. In Citrus County, Fla., school district workers voted 286-61 for IBT representation. The 450worker unit includes bus drivers and mechanics, and maintenance, food service and grounds workers.

SEIU SEIU's emphasis on organizing brought more than 52,000 new members into the union in 1997, with another 23,000 members added through affiliation. Some late 1997 victories include 2,400 home health care workers in Santa Clara County, Calif., who voted overwhelmingly for SEIU Local 715; more than 150 RNs and LPNs at Mother Joseph Nursing Home in Seattle, who voted to be represented by SEIU District 1199NW; and workers at the Mark Twain Community Hospital in Calaveras County, Calif., who signed on with SEIU Local 4988.

UFCW Casino workers at a Wilmington, Del., racetrack voted for Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 representation. The 154 Delaware Park employees work in the video lottery/slot machine operations. They include cashiers, technicians and floor attendants.

UMW In Pikeville, Ky., the Mine Workers won an election for a 106-worker unit at Parkview Manor Nursing Home. The workers include LPNs, nursing assistants, cooks and housekeepers.

Shuts Ou Vyorkers' Rights monies

orking families, members of the clergy, civil rights advocates, university students—even the city government leaders—are backing workers' efforts to organize at the Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale. The city council approved a "corporate citizenship" resolution supporting workers' rights to join a union without company interference, and the mayor even moved the city's annual Columbus Day dinner out of the Omni ballroom to protest the hotel's anti-worker stand.

But so far, Omni isn't listening. Before Omni opened its doors late last year, the ritzy hotel received \$10 million in public monies—and then reneged on a neutrality agreement signed by a former property owner. The hotel refuses to sign the agreement because it would require the hotel to bargain with HERE Local 217 if a majority joined. The local is seeking card-check recognition to avoid a lengthy election process through the National Labor Relations Board.

A community coalition supporting the workers rallied at the hotel in January to keep the pressure on Omni. The January event came on the heels of the group's testimony before the New Haven Board of Aldermen in December, where the coalition was instrumental in securing the city's support for the workers.

Two Giants Join Forces

he stage is nearly set for one of the biggest union organizing drives for health care workers in New York state—and in the nation.

Members of 1199 National Health and Human Service Employees Union will vote on a proposed partnership in which the 120,000 members of 1199 would affiliate with the 1.2-million-member SEIU. If approved by both memberships, the unions will launch a \$5 million organizing drive this year in which 45 full-time organizers will work to sign up the more than 80,000 non-union health care workers in the New York City area.

The presidents of 1199 and SEIU see the merger as critical to the fight for quality health care and to counter the growing power of corporate health care chains such as Columbia/HCA (hospitals) and Beverly Enterprises (nursing homes).

SEIU President Andrew Stern says that the merger "means a chance to improve workers' standards, which



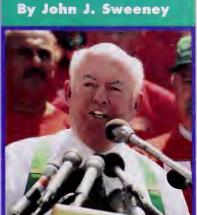
1199 President Dennis Rivera

means organizing the many nonunion workers in hospitals and clinics and home care." Members of SEIU New York City Local 144, which represents hospital workers, will also vote on a partnership proposal to join with 1199, a move that would create the largest local union—and one of the most politically powerful—in New York City.

"We will create a stronger voice for health care workers in the political arena as well as at the bargaining table," says 1199 President Dennis Rivera.

OUT FRONT

ne of the missions of today's unions is to give working families a stronger voice in their communities. And one of the ways we can further that goal is by being mindful, as we mobilize our own members, of the issues that also resonate throughout the communities in which we live and work. I'm talking about issues that enable us to build ties with local citizen's groups, decision makers and activists, actions that let us show them who we are and where we stand. On these issues, working people who are not in unions are likely to be



sympathetic toward our positions, see that we share similar goals and recognize that they will benefit if we win the fight. They may well want to join us in our struggles.

Recent experience demonstrates that some of these issues are:

- Job security. America solidly backed the Teamsters in the UPS strike, seeking an end to job insecurity and the "part-timing" of our livelihoods.
- Job safety. Workers struggling for years to organize at the Avondale naval shipyard outside New Orleans won local support because union and nonunion working people know that making a living shouldn't cost a life—or a limb. Just last month, a multidenominational group of religious leaders delivered a letter to the Avondale CEO requesting that he end his resistance and sit down with the union.
- Sweatshops, child labor and worker exploitation. Consumers and religious allies joined unionists in turning out for some 20 events during the recent Season of Conscience to end sweatshops.
- Health care quality. Food and Commercial Workers at Beverly
 Enterprises' Trussville Nursing Home in Birmingham, Ala., won a
 new contract and wage increase last year when workers were joined
 by families of patients in a local campaign. Local 1657 demonstrated that the quality of patient care is closely related to the health
 and safety of workers.
- Economic and social justice. A basic sense of economic fairness—that working families should earn wages sufficient to raise their children in dignity—often unites towns and draws support from the religious community and communities of color. The clergy has been well-represented in actions on behalf of strawberry workers trying to organize in California; civil rights and community leaders spearheaded the fight for fair hiring and training practices for workers seeking justice at the Omni-New Haven (Conn.) Hotel at Yale; and community and religious activists joined union members in marches and rallies in 50 cities during December's National Day of Action for Welfare/Workfare Justice.

Each time we reach out to nonunion workers in our communities, we increase our chances for success by swelling the ranks of those who will stand and march and struggle beside us. But we also pave the way for future organizing wins by demonstrating for these folks how a union fights for working families.

BURKE/PAGE ON

Across the country, workers who "blow the whistle" are disciplined and dismissed by employers whose idea of a safety policy is to ignore the problem and fire the worker. After auditing cases filed by workers seeking solutions to hazards on the job, the DOL's Inspector General's office found that 67 percent of the workers had been fired,



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Anen Speaking Out BY MIKE HALL COSSS

n 1995, Kathy Saumier, a 35-year-old single mother of two, desperately searched for a job as her employer closed its doors. But when she was hired as a packer and inspector at Landis Plastics' spanking new automated plant in Solvay, N.Y., she had no idea she was walking into a work-place nightmare. At Landis, she became the target of management threats, was subjected to outrageous lies about her conduct and finally lost her much-needed job. All because she spoke out about safety problems at the plant, where plastic containers for food products such as margarine are made.

Saumier is not alone. Across the country, workers who "blow the whistle" are disciplined and dismissed by employers whose idea of a safety policy is to ignore the problem and fire the worker. From 1992 through 1996, more than 13,000 workers sought help from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration saying they were penalized for raising health and safety concerns. There is no way of knowing how many more workers faced reprisals but didn't seek OSHA's help.

Section 11c of the Occupational Safety and Health Act prohibits retaliation by bosses against workers who expose safety dangers. But a random audit of 11c cases for fiscal year 1994 (released in 1997) by the Department of Labor's Office of the Inspector General found that while workers should feel free to raise health and safety concerns without fear of being penalized or dismissed by their employers, "many employers are not receptive" to requests that workplace hazards be addressed, and "feel free to discipline workers" who seek solutions. In 67 percent of the cases that the IG audited, the workers had been fired.

"Sanctions against employers engaging in this type of conduct are too weak, and protection for workers who speak out about or refuse unsafe work are not strong enough," said Nancy Lessin of the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Health and Safety, testifying before a U.S. Senate committee last year.

Woe to the worker who is injured on the job because some companies operate under the premise that any accident is the employee's fault, not the result of uncorrected hazards. Discipline and dismissal can be the end result of filing for workers' compensation.

Safety advocates want 11c to include language that would penalize employers for disciplining and firing employees who raise job safety concerns on injury reports. But OSHA legislation currently before Congress does not include such worker protection; in fact, bills in both houses would gut the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Cases of safety-related worker dismissal and discrimination cut across all industries and jobs, from auto plants to nursing homes, from poultry processors to offices. A look at a nonunion plant not only shows how management can run roughshod over workers who stand up for safety, but also indicates how such tactics

fuel workers' fire to organize.

And an overview of health and safety issues at a union shop shows the way union strength often enables workers to fight back.

Workplace Safety Horrors

Despite its modern appearance, Landis was a medieval health and safety nightmare. As a result of improperly guarded machinery, Saumier observed workers losing their fingers at 100 times the national workplace average. In 1996, more than half of the 180 employees had suffered lost-time injuries, 60 of them ergonomically related, according to Mike Wright, Steelworkers' health, safety and environment director. The plant's overall injury rate was seven times the national average in the plastics industry.

Saumier didn't waste any time in seeking to change her workplace conditions. First, she talked with her supervisors. Although management formed a safety committee, except for two meetings, little was done. So, when the Steelworkers began an organizing drive at the plant in April 1996, Saumier enthusiastically joined in. Three months later, she signed an OSHA complaint.

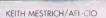
Management Shrugs Off OSHA Fines

The company's reaction to OSHA and its retaliation against Saumier graphically illustrate why companies have the upper hand under the current OSH Act. OSHA found 65 "egregious willful" violations of federal safety rules at Landis and fined the company more than \$720,000. A Landis executive told the local

television station that the firm considered the OSHA fines "nothing more than unpaid parking tickets"—and vowed to fight for years.

Management then turned on Saumier. Although she received strong support from many work-

ers, she says she was taunted by antiunion workers whom she believes were encouraged by management. She says she was investigated repeatedly on



phony charges—management even called the police to the plant after accusing her of tampering with another employee's car.

Inside the plant, Saumier—whose account is backed by witnesses—says a segment of workers routinely engaged in crude sexual and sometimes racial actions and insults, while management refused to respond to her requests to address the harassment. Then, in a bizarre twist, Saumier was accused by management of inappropriately touching a male co-worker and fired for sexual harassment. The constant strain she had experienced on the job pushed Saumier to the edge of her endurance. "I just went into shock and was crying," she recalls. "I ended up in the emergency room."

With the help of the Steelworkers, Saumier filed an 11c complaint with OSHA and an unfair labor relations charge with the National Labor Relations Board. OSHA deferred action to the NLRB, which is seeking full reinstatement and back pay for Saumier because she filed a complaint and supported the union. The NLRB has taken her case to federal court to help Saumier get her job back.

Meanwhile, the Steelworkers' election at Landis is pending until the outcome of more than 70 unfair labor practice charges, including threats, intimidation and dismissals, that the NLRB filed against Landis. And as for Saumier, she says she is "still hanging in there, still fighting it."

"I would go back because that's my job, and I did my job well. We're not out to break the company, we're there to help them." Saumier now is working with the Steelworkers as an organizer assigned to Landis.

In Iowa, a Fight for Safety

Halfway across the country, workplace health and safety at the Des Moines, Iowa Bridgestone/Firestone plant took a turn for the worse after the health and safety committee of Steelworkers' (then Rubberworkers') Local 310 began looking for solutions to hazardous workplace conditions. Local 310's action led to OSHA fines for the explosion of a rubber mixer that left two workers with second- and third-degree burns over 60 percent of their bodies. The company also was fined for not deactivating dangerous machinery during maintenance, the absence of a policy covering work in enclosed areas where the lack of oxygen or the accumulation of hazardous fumes could result in injury or death and other safety and health violations.

"We got down to filing OSHA complaints that resulted in pretty substantial penalties—\$225,000 for 80 violations," says Steve Sallman, the local union's health and safety chair. In response, the company drastically scaled back the local union's health and safety committee. Sallman's full-time paid health and safety post was eliminated, and his access to the plant was limited. Sallman, who remains an unpaid union

health and safety rep, says that Bridgestone/Firestone's safety policies and heavy in-plant discipline are aimed at active union members. "If you wear your black and gold (USWA) T-shirt, you're treated differently," he says.

Management's draconian policies have bolstered worker solidarity at the plant—and the local is taking advantage of increased organizing opportunities among the new employees, who show significant union support.

"The one thing the company has done is unite the union. You could have had 10,000 solidarity picnics and not forged the solidarity we have," Sallman says.

Although the union's battle for safety and dignity in the workplace is tough, Sallman says he speaks for all plant workers when he promises that they won't give up—or give in.

Little Incentive to Follow the Law

Employers feel free to discipline, discriminate and discharge workers over safety issues because there is little incentive to follow the law. If workers or their unions seek 11c protection, the odds are the case never will get to a court: Only 460 of the 13,000-plus complaints filed between fiscal year 1992 and fiscal year 1996 were sent to the DOI's Office of the Solicitor (SOL) for possible federal court action.

About 2,000 complaints were settled, but the IG's report noted that the cases it reviewed do not show that workers were compensated sufficiently when OSHA ruled in their favor. The IG's audit also revealed that in some 81 percent of the cases, the SOL did not meet the 90-day



Standing strong: Fired from her job at the Landis Plastics' plant in New York after blowing the whistle on hazardous working conditions there, Kathy Saumier fights back as a Steelworkers' organizer.

requirement for issuing a legal determination on whether to proceed to court. In one case, the report noted an almost four-year delay between the time a worker filed an 11c complaint and SOL action. The case was not pursued because the worker had died, and without the worker's testimony, SOL deemed success as "unlikely."

When a case does get to court, there is no specific provision in the law calling for penalties or for punitive damages when an employer is found guilty of a Section 11c violation. In several egregious cases, the courts have award-

Turning a Health and Safety Problem Into an Organizing Opportunity

Health and safety ranks near the top of concerns for unorganized workers, and that often makes organizing around workplace safety issues an effective strategy, says Steve Schrag, eastern region health and safety organizer for SEIU.

"It's a way of talking about an issue that workers care more about than money—respect and control over the job," he says.

"We've found that if we bring up health and safety in an organizing campaign, raise the issue through workers and local publicity, the company will often correct the problem," says Debbie Berkowitz, health and safety director for the United Food and Commercial Workers. "That gives the union a lot of credibility in the eyes of the workers and gives them a sense of what it would be like to work with the power of a union behind them."

That's what happened in Sioux City, Iowa, where 456 workers at Marian Health Center joined UFCW Local 222. Hospital staffing had shrunk to dangerous levels, workers' injuries were increasing and patient care declining, says Local 222 President Frank Casady.

Along with reduced staffing levels, Casady says equipment to protect both patients and workers was not always available. "We were able to show them how staffing levels, grievance procedures and safety language are included in contracts at organized hospitals. That was a strong selling point."

When health and safety are major organizing issues, it can broaden union support at the worksite and in the community. "Fighting for health and safety issues runs counter to the stereotype some people have about unions, that we're all about dues money and money for politics," says Schrag. "Pollution in the workplace is pollution in the community. An asbestos problem in the school is not just a worker issue, it impacts their kids, their families and everyone in the community."

ed punitive damages to the worker. But in most cases, the biggest penalty an employer faces is providing back pay (minus any unemployment benefits or other earned income since dismissal), reinstating the worker and purging his or her personnel records.

The end result is that corporations, with their deep pockets, are aided by a lengthy legal process that enables them to drag out litigation intentionally and outlast workers who are missing paychecks every week.

Safety advocates argue that stiff penalties and punitive damages are a much-needed incentive to prevent companies from retaliating against workers. But unless workers and their unions mobilize on a massive scale to take that message to Congress, anti-worker members of Congress who support company-dominated, worker-management "teams" and oppose OSHA will not give workers or OSHA more

tools to fight for safe and healthy workplaces. In fact, one GOP-backed safety bill introduced last year would have required workers to bring health and safety issues to management before contacting OSHA—even though the IG's study showed those workers were far more likely to get fired. Bills now in both houses would allow employers to eliminate penalties for OSHA violations and take away workers' rights to inspections (see box, below).

Anti-worker lawmakers killed federal safety legislation in 1991 and 1993 that would have strengthened 11c by giving workers the right to refuse unsafe work, allowing the preliminary reinstatement of workers who are disciplined or fired while their cases are pending, and providing for penalties against employers who retaliate against workers.

As Sallman says, "11c has to have more bite."

Plan Now for Workers Memorial Day

Workers across the country are set to demand an end to the attack on workplace safety and to call for stronger guarantees for safe jobs on Workers Memorial Day, April 28.

Make our voice heard: Union members will take the

message for "Safe Jobs: Make Our Voice Heard" to

the public April 28, Workers Memorial Day.

Under the theme, "Safe Jobs: Make Our Voice Heard," union members will educate workers and the public about the threat all workers face from OSHA "deform" bills that would weaken enforcement of safety laws. Workers and their unions also will put lawmakers on notice that they will be held accountable if they turn their backs on worker safety.

In rallies, candlelight vigils and other events across the nation, workers will remember the millions of workers who have been injured or killed on the job. Although work-related deaths and injuries have decreased significantly since 1970, when the Occupational Health and Safety Act became law, more than 50,000 workers die and another 6 million are injured every year.

This year, Workers Memorial Day will highlight the need for stronger whistle-blower protections for workers who stand up for safety issues and stress the need to extend OSHA coverage to all workers. At the same time, union members will mobilize for tougher workplace standards by continuing last year's drive to "Stop the Pain" of repetitive stress injuries, crippling back problems and other ergonomic injuries by establishing new ergonomic standards.

On April 28, workers plan to tell the public—and their employers—that the best way to ensure safe jobs is to organize for safe jobs. A strong union can keep you alive.

Don't Let Congress "Deform" OSHA

Although many workers on the shop floor face immediate danger from unsafe workplaces, long-term hazards for all workers are brewing in Congress. Under the guise of so-called OSHA reform, legislation in the House and Senate instead would "deform" the federal safety agency.

Misnamed the "SAFE Act" by backers, bills proposed last year in both houses would allow employers to hire their own inspectors to protect them from OSHA penalties and take away workers' rights to inspections. They would shift OSHA's focus from strong enforcement to voluntary compliance from employers. The Senate bill, S. 1237, was approved by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee last fall.

In the 104th Congress in 1997, Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.) introduced a House bill aimed at gutting OSHA. Thanks to worker mobilization—in which union members packed several congressional hearings—Ballenger's OSHA deform measure was defeated. But in an effort to defuse opposition, the long-time OSHA foe has a new tactic—eight separate bills. The antihealth and safety bills would:

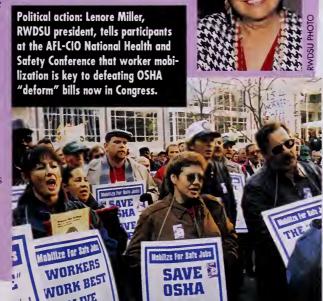
- •Allow employers to keep the results of safety and health audits secret, even when serious hazards are found.
- •Give employers the go-ahead to ignore OSHA standards, and instead determine for themselves how best to "protect" workers.
- •Impose new risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis for OSHA standards, making it more difficult to issue new safety standards.

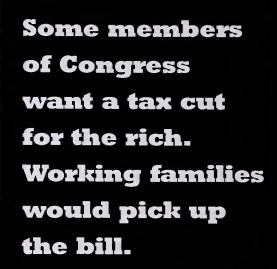
•Cut worker training and education by 90 percent.

Worker mobilization is key to defeating these attacks on safety. Heavy pressure from working families and community allies stopped Ballenger's previous attempts to gut OSHA; recognizing that renewed

attacks on OSHA require an immediate and forceful response, more than 800 union safety and health activists attended the AFL-CIO's National Health and Safety Conference in November, where they planned strategies to mobilize workers for political and legislative action.

"It's quite clear how important health and safety issues are, especially in organizing, because these issues frequently are the main concerns workers bring to us," Lenore Miller, President, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, told conference participants.





he federal income tax, while far from perfect, is based on the premise that those with greater income should pay progressively higher taxes. Many in Congress are attempting to throw any concept of a progressive tax out the window, under the guise of tax "reform" and simplification.

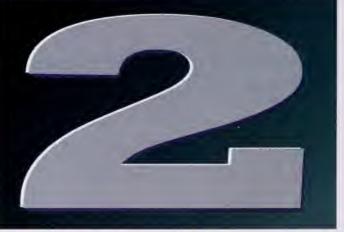
Tax Cuts for the Rich

Last year, Congress pushed through the 1997 Tax Act, which hiked taxes on the 40 percent of households with the smallest incomes, while giving 57 percent of the tax cuts to the top 5 percent. The act's multiple tax breaks for the rich at the expense of working families include:

- A capital gains tax cut to help those who make their money by investing rather than working.
- An estate tax cut windfall for the richest 1 percent of Americans.









- Loopholes that enable some corporations to escape taxation entirely.
- New retirement savings provisions that benefit upper-middle income and upper-income groups.
- Expanded foreign income tax exemptions that encourage the export of jobs.

Tax "reform" proposals now in Congress camouflage attempts by anti-worker forces to reorganize the economy to benefit the wealthy—to consolidate wealth, starve state and local governments and shift the tax burden to the same working families that have seen little benefit from a succession of massive tax cuts. Backers of these proposals have made it clear that their ultimate goal is to abolish the progressive tax system altogether.

Two Ways to Hike Taxes for Workers

Republican leaders in Congress are united in their desire to stick it to working people, and they are looking at several ways to go about



Flat tax follies: U.S. House Majority Leader Richard Armey is pushing for a 17 percent flat tax that would mean higher taxes for lowincome folks.

it. House Majority Leader Richard Armey (Texas) is pushing for a 17 percent flat tax, while Rep. W.J. "Billy" Tauzin (R-La.) wants a national sales tax.

Armey has promised that his plan will remove millions of people from the tax rolls. He's right. His plan would mean a lot of wealthy folks could avoid taxes. They wouldn't have to worry about IRS enforcement because there would not be much left to enforce. But the numbers

don't add up. Armey says taxes will drop for everyone and the deficit won't increase. But it doesn't take an economist to know that you don't get something for nothing. You can't cut taxes on the rich without making it up somewhere else.

So who gets stuck with the bill for this free ride? Take a look in the mirror. A Treasury Department study of the plan anticipates an annual revenue shortfall of \$186 billion. Workers no longer would be able to deduct mortgage interest, state income and property taxes, medical expenses and charitable donations. Businesses no longer could deduct the cost of providing health insurance to their employees. Although the very rich would enjoy annual tax cuts averaging more than

1997 Tax Act

So here's how that big tax cut we've all been promised gets distributed down the line:

| income Level | Percentage of Tax Break | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Top 1 percent | 32.4 percent | |
| Next 4 percent | 14 percent | |
| Next 15 percent | 31.5 percent | |
| Second 20 percent | 17.6 percent | |
| Middle 20 percent | 6.1 percent | |
| Fourth 20 percent | Unchanged | |
| Lowest 20 percent | TAX HIKE | |

\$50,000, the typical family would pay almost \$2,000 more each year.

A national retail sales tax doesn't even pretend to be progressive. Under such a tax, consumers would pay federal taxes every time they step up to the cash register. Although Tauzin has proposed a tax rate of 15 percent, the Joint Economic Committee believes the rate would have to be much higher to keep from increasing the public debt, even if the entire Gross Domestic Product, including government purchases, services and exports, was covered. Even Armey calls it a hidden tax that would be easy to increase.

"This is an enormously regressive tax hurting all working families," says International Mass Retail Association Vice President Cecilia Adams.

Politicizing the IRS

The House also is considering legislation that would radically restructure the IRS. But under the pretense of making the agency more responsive to taxpayers, the House proposal instead would make the agency vulnerable to intense political pressure. IRS functions would be transferred to a new part-time board of directors, made up of one representative each from the Treasury Department and the IRS employees' union, plus *seven* corporate executives, who would have control over the budget.

Talk about a conflict of interest. The corporate honchos would work part time for the government and full time for their corporations. And they would be appointed by presidents, whose campaigns historically are financed by contributions from—you get the picture.

"They want the foxes to run the henhouse," says Robert McIntyre of Citizens for Tax Justice.

Helping Working Families Protect Their Wallets

What would *real* tax reform look like? It would embody family-wise economics. Eliminating tax shelters that encourage foolish or

speculative investments would result in better investments that create and retain well-paying jobs filled by a skilled work force.

Union activists need to educate their members and mobilize them to work for *real* tax reform that:

- Closes tax loopholes for the wealthy. Current tax loopholes allow wealthy people to shelter some types of income and take deductions that average working families don't get. For instance, the wealthy can write off interest on yacht payments by claiming their boats as second homes—but low-income workers may not get mortgage deductions at all because they can't afford to buy homes. Workers pay income taxes and Social Security taxes on their wages—to the tune of 30 percent or more—while big chunks of the stock and bond profits of rich investors are exempt.
- Ensures the wealthy pay their fair share. Real tax reform would guarantee that everyone pays his or her fair share. It would crack

down on tax rules that allow multinational corporations to avoid tens of billions of dollars a year in taxes on their U.S. profits by shifting income—on paper outside the country. It would end the \$38-billion-a-vear subsidy that companies get from writing off phantom "wear-and-tear" on their buildings and machinery. It would close industry-specific loopholes—for oil companies, banks, paper companies and others-that cost average taxpayers bil-



Consumer tax: Rep. W.J.
Tauzin (R-La.) wants a
national sales tax, making
consumers pay federal
taxes every time they step
up to the cash register.

lions of dollars more every year.

• Gives working Americans a fair shake. And real tax reform would restore the federal government's ability to contribute to the American dream for all citizens at each stage of their lives by ensuring prevention of childhood diseases, access to education, occupational training, job opportunities, a secure retirement and good and affordable health care and housing.

The tax attack is a coordinated effort to boost the fortunes of the rich by sticking it to working families. But there's no better time than an election year for working families to tell congressional leaders what they think about subsidizing the rich—and how they'll vote in November if their senators or representatives go along with the tax scam

STRATEGIC PROGRAMS BUILD UNION ACTIVISM

hen the vote on Fast Track legislation was pending in Congress last year, Steelworkers' members wasted no time mobilizing for action. In plant after plant, local union stewards and activists photocopied and distributed material explaining the relevance of Fast Track to members and talked oneon-one with their co-workers to generate letters and phone calls to Congress. And it worked.

Steelworkers flooded Congressional switchboards and traveled to Washington to take their message to lawmakers. Their efforts resulted in 160,000 letters to Congress and the White House opposing the legislation: Letters so personal and compelling that they stood out from

resources necessary to create a network of trainers and coordinators, supported by data collection and processing, to ensure a fast flow of information as the program expands. The union already has compiled a database of more than 18,000 trained Rapid Response activists whom the union can tap for future actions.

"We're looking at people who are interested in politics but don't have a lot of time," says Tim Waters, USWA District 7 Rapid Response coordinator. "The beauty of this program

Support from the top: Loc union executive boord me ber participotion bolsters SEIU Locol 285's Ropid

Response teom in Boston.

MOBILIZING

the masses of pre-printed postcards. One of the individual messages was sent by Gail Rogers from Waynesville, N.C.; her job and her husband's job are being moved to Mexico.

"As I look around at my fellow employees, I grieve for my co-worker who committed suicide a month ago, and I see the ones who are going to counseling because they don't know which way to turn or what to do next," Rogers wrote. "We don't want your food stamps and aid; we only want our jobs."

The swift, well-coordinated action that so successfully generated grassroots involvement around Fast Track was not a one-time event; it was the result of "Rapid Response," a program USWA created nearly two years ago to boost members' union and political activism.

Fast Track is just the latest success in USWA's strategic move to increase member involvement. Last March, Rapid Response teams generated more than 50,000 letters opposing comp time and legislation that would have permitted thinly disguised company unions, the socalled "Team Act."

After USWA District 12 members fired off nearly 200 letters to Rep. Jay Dickey (R-Ark.) asking him to oppose Fast Track, Dickey called them to set up a meeting. "Dickey wanted to meet with us because he had received so many letters," recalls Ronnie Walraven, USWA District 12 coordinator. "We can't gripe on how they vote if we don't tell them

The Fast Track victory affirmed USWA's decision to commit the

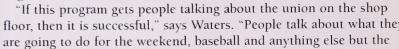
Taking bock political power: "You empowered yourselves ot the grassroots level," Steelworkers' President George Becker told mem bers of the union's Ropid Response team.

is that it can be done in the shop, on the floor, at work. You aren't asking members to talk with strangers. These are their co-workers.'

In addition to mobilizing members around bread-andbutter legislative issues, USWA utilizes the Rapid Response program to bring in new talent and

provide leadership development by giving activists an opportunity to cut their teeth on Rapid Response's successful one-on-one organizing. Locals have found that Rapid Response is a helpful tool for locals in running voter registration drives and keeping up to date on contract

"If this program gets people talking about the union on the shop floor, then it is successful," says Waters. "People talk about what they

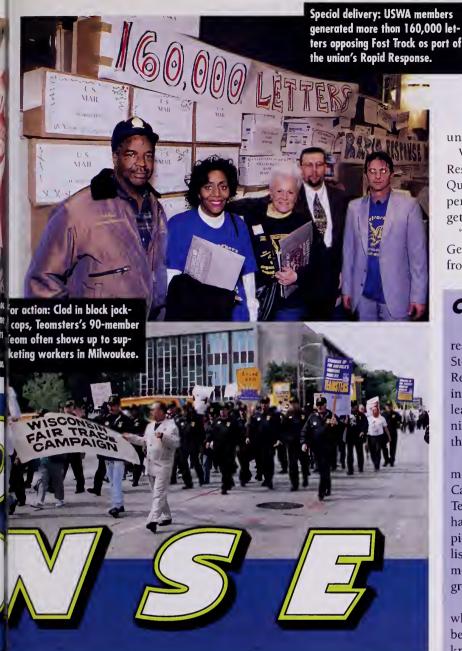


TOP, STEVE MAZUN; BOTTOM, BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE PHOTO

United Steelworkers of Ame

Rapid Response Program

National Conference



SETTING UP RAPID RESPONSE

Here's how the Steelworkers' Rapid Response program works:

- Rapid Response coordinators from the union's rank-and-file are tapped in each of the Steelworkers' nine U.S. districts. Each participating local designates a program coordinator, and two Rapid Response coordinators oversee Rapid Response at the USWA's Pittsburgh headquarters.
- The international urges local unions to recruit 4 percent of their members for rapid response actions; these activists form the core of the Rapid Response "team." Those local unions that hit the 4 percent mark get a fax machine from the international.
- District coordinators train local union coordinators and team members in communication skills, issues analysis and the overall program. Some two dozen activists in each district participate in train-the-trainer preparation to assist district coordinators with the training.
- Local unions receive timely "InfoFAXES" on relevant issues, both current and anticipated, and the Rapid Response team distributes them throughout the membership.
- When action is needed on an issue, an "ActionCALL" is transmitted by fax, and the local union Rapid Response team makes one-on-one contact with workers to get them involved.

union. We have to get them back to this."

When USWA activists gathered for the union's first national Rapid Response conference in Washington, D.C., in December, Rep. Jack Quinn (R-N.Y.) pointed to a huge display representing the 160,000 personal letters sent to oppose Fast Track saying, "That's the way you get reaction, and that's the way you get votes in Washington, D.C."

"You empowered yourselves at the grassroots level," union President George Becker told participants. "You took the political power back from the halls of Washington."

COAST-TO-COAST UNION TEAM ACTION

Mobilizing teams of members for fast, direct union action not only results in critical support for legislative or contract battles. Like the Steelworkers, unions that have channeled resources to creating Rapid Response or Action Teams are finding that strategically recruiting and involving members generates opportunities to educate and develop leadership skills—key steps in identifying and recruiting union organizers. In many instances, the union's efforts are getting a boost from the AFL-CIO's Street Heat grassroots campaign.

"We began our Strike Force in 1991 as a means to get members more involved in the local," says Teamsters Local 25 President George Cashman, who describes the response to the local's call for Action Team members as "phenomenal." Boston Local 25 team members have pledged to participate when called, and last year they walked the picket lines during the UPS strike. Local 25 has compiled a working list of 1,500 strike force activists, including retired members. "Our members are proud to help other union members and community groups to create responses to different situations," Cashman says.

Boston is also home to SEIU Local 285's Rapid Response team, which includes Wilhelmina Goss, a local union executive board member. "I've walked the picket line, and I've faced management, so I know about the struggle," says Goss. "If you are a true union member, you never forget where you come from."

IBT Local 200 in Milwaukee takes an aggressive approach to standing up for workers' rights. Clad in black jackets with matching caps, dark pants, shoes and shades, the 90-member Action Team is ready to mobilize when striking workers need a show of support.

"We will disperse in a crowd with pro-union leaflets," Local 200 Organizing Director Darryl Connell says of the nearly two-year-old Action Team.

When direct union action is needed in the Michigan area, the UAW Region 1A Flying Squadron is fast on the scene. "We have between 700 and 800 volunteers in the squadron who understand the importance of rebuilding the labor movement through direct actions," says Bob King, Region 1A director.

The Food and Commercial Workers have been successful in encouraging locals to institute versions of Rapid Response programs. Local 428 in San Jose, Calif., mobilized so many members and raised such community support that it was able to encourage the local government to ask a local K-mart to pay its workers a living wage. During last year's gubernatorial election in New Jersey, Local 1262 in Clifton, N.J., turned out about 600 workers to leaflet and support the Democratic gubernatorial candidate. "We tell our locals to do anything to reach their members," says George Landers, special assistant in the UFCW legislative and political affairs department. "Union actions help the union remain strong."



Affirmative action is a tool that gives qua Affirmative action does not guarantee success, only an oppor

Opening doors: A federal ruling requiring General Electric to create an affirmative action plan to overcome glaring imbalances in its workforce enabled assembler Alexandra Brown to translate her skills into a higher-paying job.

tunity in education, employment and contracting they would otherwise have been denied."

One well-known figure who credits affirmative action for opening doors that otherwise would have been closed is former Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Colin Powell. "I benefitted from affirmative action in the Army because

the Army said we are all going to be equal," he says.

Women have been among the chief beneficiaries of affirmative action; by giving them a fair chance to compete for jobs, affirmative action has increased the number of working women, adding income to their households that in many cases makes it possible for a family to get by. In just one occupation, the medical field, the number of female medical school graduates quadrupled from 1970 to 1990, according to the American Medical Association.

But more must be done. "There is still strong evidence of discrimination in the workplace throughout this country," says Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. "If you look at the lack of people of color and women in management jobs and the fact that women make only 74 cents for each dollar a man makes, you would have to say that the playing field hardly is level." Women and people of color filed 91,000 discrimination complaints with the federal government in 1995and more than half were upheld. There is a wide income gap between white workers and workers of color. In 1997, white workers made on average \$515 a week, blacks \$397 and Latinos \$352, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The motivations of affirmative action opponents are varied. But at bottom, their strategies share a common result: They divide working families on the issue of affirmative action by playing on their economic fears. Opponents claim that the increased number of workers who are persons of color and women is behind working families' economic woes and that workers are better off without affirmative action. But when working families see their salaries stagnate and work longer hours to make ends meet, it's not because affirmative action gave someone a chance at a job. It's a result of tax breaks for the wealthy and corporate cutthroat economics and policies that use massive



layoffs as a route to higher profits.

Long recognizing that all working people regardless of race or gender deserve a fair chance at good jobs, labor unions have negotiated affirmative action programs in collective bargaining agreements. For instance, the Communications Workers of America bargained with Nevada Bell to jointly run the "Jobs Preparation Program." The jobs program helps employees gain experience in different areas, and it raises their skill levels so that the workers are more competitive when new positions open up. And diversity makes good business sense. Leaders from major corporations, such as AT&T's Chairman Robert Allen, see affirmative action programs as clear assets to their companies. Affirmative action is "clearly a competitive advantage for AT&T that lets us engage and expand not only our business partnerships, but also our customer base," Allen says.

At the national level, the AFL-CIO and its affiliates have joined the fight to save affirmative action. Most recently, the AFL-CIO backed the nomination of Bill Lann Lee to be the nation's first Asian American assistant attorney general for civil rights. And the federation and its affiliates will battle House and Senate legislation that

AFFIR

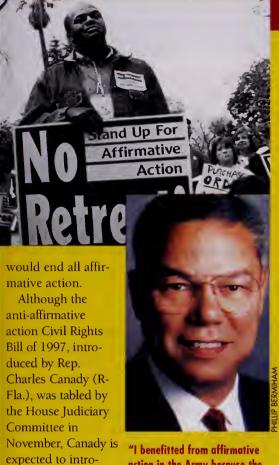
'n 1978, Alexandra Brown saw her chance to make a better living at the General Electric Riverworks plant in Massachusetts, and became one of the first women hired as an apprentice there. But Brown wouldn't even have had a chance at the job if the federal government had not required GE to develop an affirmative action plan to overcome glaring imbalances in its workforce—and if her union had not enforced the plan in court. For the first three years under the plan, GE hired five times as many men as women in higherpaying jobs. It was only after Electronics Workers Local 201 took GE to court that the company opened up more jobs to women. "Affirmative action gave me an opportunity that I didn't believe possible," says Brown, who is now a high-paid assembler.

Today, Brown might not be so fortunate. A multi-front attack on affirmative action is under way in Congress, state legislatures and courtrooms across the country. Last year, anti-affirmative action forces in Congress introduced the so-called Civil Rights Act of 1997-which actually would curtail civil rights by outlawing programs that attempt to level the playing field for women and people of color. Similar legislation is expected to be introduced again this year. California's recently passed Proposition 209, which abolishes all state programs that provide a fair chance for women and people of color to attain jobs, housing and education, has spawned copycat initiatives and legislation in many states, most recently in Washington state.

But what do these attacks mean for working families?

"Without affirmative action, many families would not have survived the onslaught of job losses and downsizing," says Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of civil and human rights groups that includes the AFL-CIO. "Affirmative action programs work because they make a difference. They have literally given millions of working men and women equal oppor-

viduals equal access and equal opportunities. ualified workers to perform and demonstrate their capabilities.



"I benefitted from affirmative action in the Army because the Army said we are all going to be equal."

—General Colin Powell

gates asserted that affirmative action has "moved our society measurably closer to the democratic goal of equal opportunity"—but recognized that the equality gap is too wide to justify relaxing affirmative action efforts. "If there are flaws in these methods, then by all means, we should correct them. But let us not use them as a pretext for returning to the complacent and degrading policies of the past."

duce a similar bill

Last fall, at the

Federation's 1997

convention, dele-

early this year.

FIGHTHEODS

The attacks an affirmative action are full of myths and falsehoods. Here's amma to cambat the most frequently heard miscanceptions:

Myth: Affirmative action can be used legally to hire a woman or a person of calar who is not qualified to do the iab.

Reality: Under the law, a person must be qualified to benefit from affirmative action. The program enlarges the pool of qualified applicants to give everyone a fair chance.

Myth: Affirmative action works against unions because it imposes quatas.

Reality: Quatas, the required hiring of a specific number of people of one race or gender, ore illegal. Affirmative action's opponents use the word "quata" to mislead people. An emplayer can set goals, not quatas.

Myth: There na langer is enough discrimination to warront affirmative action.

Reality: There is still jab discrimination ogainst wamen and people of calar. Of 91,000 camplaints of jab discrimination filed in 1995, half were upheld. The wage gap between whites and people of calar and between men and wamen *grew* in the 1980s. Unemplayment remains higher for people of calar.

Myth: Affirmative action ignores seniority.

Reality: Affirmative action cannot violate a union contract's seniarity clause. Opponents of affirmative oction use this argument os a smake screen. They say that without affirmative action, jab applicants would be hired based on merit. Their real agenda is to replace seniarity with merit, and then replace jab security with merit. Merit means basses would hald all the power—and it's well known how unfair basses

can be when they hald all the pawer. That's why unians are organized in the first place. Unians fight far clear pracedures—such as affirmative action, pramation lists and seniarity—ta create fair warkplaces.

Myth: Affirmative action takes jabs from white males and gives them to wamen and people of color.

Reality: Arguments against affirmative action divert attention from the real issues of where American jobs have gane. Everyone is hurt by law woges and dead-end jobs. Wages are not stagnant and jobs are not last because wamen and people of color have access to jobs that pay living wages. Carporate greed, rampant downsizing, contracting out and free-trade agreements like NAFTA are the villains.

Myth: Affirmative action omaunts to a farm of "reverse discrimination" against whites.

Reality: Whites are pratected by the same anti-discriminatian laws as everyone else. In fact, successful claims of "reverse discriminatian" have been extremely rare. According to a study commissioned by the federal Department of Labar, fewer than 100 of the 3,000 employment discriminatian cases decided by the federal courts between 1990 and 1994 invalved claims of reverse discriminatian—and most of them were found invalid.

Myth: Standardized tests are the anly abjective way to decide who is best qualified to do a jab.

Reality: Standardized tests do not measure how well sameone can do a jab. They anly measure how well the person takes tests. Successful jab performance is based an many factars that are not assessed in standardized tests.

Source: Acting in the Affirmative, An SEIU Reclaim America Compaign for Equity and Fairness.



"As a labor leader, I believe many of the causes—and cures—of inequality can be found in the workplace."

-LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON

INITIATIVE ON E

hen President Bill Clinton farmed the nation's first advisary baard of the Initiative an Race in 1997, he appainted AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thampsan to the seven-member panel. Chavez-Thampsan is the only labar representative and the only Latina baard member. America@work asked Chavez-Thampsan about the baard and its activities:

Question: What is the goal of the Initiative on Race?

Chavez-Thompson: We are trying to put a face on the issue of diversity, to show what America must do to deal with the issue of race. I firmly believe the keys are education and economics. Economics cuts across race. If you look at people of color who belong to unions, they earn better pay. And when you earn more, you can turn yourself around ond do things far yourself that government is now doing. Most people of colar live in cities where there are poor facilities and services and a decaying infrastructure. There is little tax base, so the city cannot pay for the same quality schools and facilities that are available in the suburbs. That would not be the case if

Fighting for Justice:
On Martin Luther King
Day in January, union
members protested
the possible closing of
public hospitals in
Memphis, Tenn., that
serve the city's poor.

workers were earning a living wage and could afford a decent education for their children or buy a hame and revive the economy in their towns. But despite all aur progress, people of color still are hurt by stagnant wages and the decline in good-paying manufactur-

ing jobs that affect warking people of every background.

Yet, better wages alone are not the answer. We need to find ways to deal with the issues of education and social division. In education, we have to look at how we can give children of every race a good education that will give them a leg up. Lost December, I conducted a hearing at an elementary school in Virginia where there are 900 students who speak mare than 20 longuages. We wanted to know how educators bridge the language gap and successfully teach those students.

Q: You are the only labor representative on the board. How does your role as an advocate for working families inform the discussions?

Chavez-Thompson: I believe one of the reasons the president appointed me is that, as a labor leader, I believe many of the causes—and cures—of inequality of all kinds can be found in the warkplace. Working in the Texas cottan fields as a girl and organizing workers throughout the Southwest as an adult, I saw injustices against blacks, Hispanics and women. That's why I hope our advisory board, through our national discussion, will address the issues of jobs and poychecks. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. declared that it wasn't enough to be able to sit at a lunch counter if you couldn't afford the price of a hamburger—and he gave his life supporting the struggle of Memphis sanitation workers to organize a union. Dr. King understood that working people of all backgrounds can win a greater measure of justice when they organize.

Some of the most important civil rights struggles are being

waged by working Americans who are organizing to join unions and gain a better life. Far workers in the strawberry fields of California, the clothing and textile mills of the South and the hospitals and nursing homes of the Northeast and Midwest the challenges to their human dignity are as stark as during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s.

I also believe that the labor movement is one of the few institutions that can build bridges acrass the barriers of race, culture and class. The AFL-CIO is preparing a *Practical Guide ta Impraving Race Relatians, Equality and Oppartunity in the Warkplace* that will focus on the best practices of unions and management to fight discrimination. The Federation also will

spansor forums around the cauntry to highlight haw warkers and managers have jained tagether to improve race relations and fight discrimination.



Q: The public perception is that the Initiative does not have a facus and is not accomplishing anything. Is that the case?

Chavez-Thompson: That's the perceptian that the media has portrayed. Fram the beginning, the media decided that the advisary board would nat accamplish anything—and every news story repeats that theme. We are trying ta gather good information about programs that have successfully avercome problems of race in schools, workplaces and neighborhoods. We have gathered more than 200 specific suggestions for improving race relations from across the country. In December, we had a great discussian with some top educators, including former Education Secretary William Bennett, about handling diversity at the elementory and secondary school levels.

Q: Do you think the Initiative can improve race relations?

Chavez-Thompson: We have to be able to understand each other and hear the struggles of other people if we are going to successfully live with one another ond be a truly diverse society. We have to have o real dialogue to see how we can help each other, to understand what each of us brings to the table. The Initiative gives us an opportunity to do that on a national scale.

There are a lot of problems in race relations. We can all say we have friends at work of a different race, but too often that friendship ends after eight hours. We must begin talking to each other at parties, at the gym and in our neighborhoods. If you can understand other people's challenges and struggles, you understand and respect who they are. To "redeem the promise of America," as the president proclaims, we must respect the contribution each individual makes on the jobs as well as in his or her community. Sometimes when you're trying to understand other people, it's the little things that you don't notice that can make a difference; but if you talk about them, things change. For example, my given name is not Linda, it's Lydia. But, my first-grade teacher wrote my name down as Linda, and that's what I was called. My parents didn't say onything because we were taught not to question authority and my parents thought the teacher was doing the best thing.

The same thing happened to my daughter, Maricela. I went to a parent—teacher conference and teachers kept telling me 'Mario is such a good student.' I told them her name is Maricela. All my life I've been warking, symbolically, for the day when children in every part of the cauntry, like my little grand-daughter Lydia, can keep their own names and be their own persons, no matter what their language, colar or religion.



Like It Is

When America's workers successfully opposed Fast Track, they knew what some lawmakers still don't get:

The next generation of trade policies must respect people as well as property. Working

families support a future trade policy that combines access to expanding markets, environmental

protection, job safety and workers' rights.

Last fall when Congress failed to muster enough votes to give President Clinton Fast Track negotiating authority, corporate interests hit the lecture circuit with the message that the labor movement had gone protectionist and was ignoring the realities of the new global economy—a message that was quickly spread by the elite media.

But for U.S. workers, the issue isn't whether to engage in trade. They understand that there is no turning back from an increasingly global economy. But workers don't believe that giving up labor standards is the price the United States has to pay for free trade. In fact, many within labor and other advocacy groups are seeking new ways to discuss trade and influence the future direction of trade policies,

ideally with the help of some enlightened corporate citizens.

Last May, months before Fast Track legislation even arrived on Capitol Hill, activists representing millions of unionists, environmentalists, farmers and others from the United States, Brazil, Canada, Chile and Mexico signed a declaration outlining important components of an alternative approach to trade policy—one that starts from the premise that social and economic rights, worker protections, freedom from exploitation, environmental protection and protection from capital flight and speculation must be enhanced as a condition for expanding free-trade agreements in the Americas. The coalition's efforts illustrate the strength of community-based involvement—and the success that organizing new members brings to creat-

ing a political voice for working families.

Today, workers around the world are seeking an alternative strategy that includes "an enforceable mechanism" to ensure that workers' economic rights are given the same priority as property rights and investments, which have dominated earlier trade negotiations, says Terry Collingsworth of the International Labor Rights Fund, a coalition member. Further, the need for debt relief and the creation of other steps to address differences in the various economies must be acknowledged, he says. A rising trade deficit also has hurt workers, resulting in the loss of good manufacturing jobs, stagnating or falling wages and increased job insecurity.

Looking to training programs as the sole response to import-related job losses is no longer sufficient. A truly comprehensive approach would embrace a strong commitment to full employment, rigorous and rigorously enforced labor laws, expanded educational opportunities and a fairer tax code. Companies that keep their productive capacity here at home should be rewarded, and those that don't should get the lowest priority when it comes time to award government loans and contracts.

Specifically, unions and their members

should back efforts to:

 Negotiate broad, multilateral tariff reduction agreements that open up agriculture and information technology to trade.

 Work with the World Bank and other international financial institutions to ensure that environmental concerns and core labor standards are built into lending decisions.

 Continue to negotiate a new international investment agreement that includes protections for people as well as property.

At its biennial convention in Pittsburgh last September, the AFL-CIO adopted a resolution recognizing that a response to the global economy takes more than voting down new trade agreements as they arise. Labor's comprehensive trade vision involves an aggressive and focused multinational bargaining and organizing strategy, pressure for trade-linked worker rights within existing international organizations and worker–management efforts to forge new high-performance workplaces.

Turning that vision into hard action requires educating members, organizing on a massive scale and mobilizing working families across the country to demonstrate their determination that new trade policies give workers and the environment a fair shake. And what's good for workers is ultimately good for business.

"The decisions we make will shape our involvement—and the lives of ordinary citizens—for years to come," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

Fast Track proved that policymakers respond when union members mobilize. And Fast Track was just the beginning.

---David Kameras

Union Prescription Health Care

The worst part of a workplace occident often is not the actual injury, but the struggle to get workers' compensation insurance benefits. Since 1984, the Greater Cincinnati Occupational Health Center has been the only labor-run, labor-staffed health clinic in the country. The clinic's new full-time physician, Dr. Cynthia Schumacher, is an occupational health specialist and a former union organizer. She speaks at union meetings on health and safety issues, and gives advice about whether an injury may be accepted as a workers' compensation claim.

Doctors at the nonprofit clinic not only diagnose occupational injuries, but also act as advocates for union patients with the workers' comp insurance organization and with the employer.

This center "stands for occupational safety and health," and puts the worker's interest first, says V. Daniel Radford, executive secretary-treasurer of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO.

STEELWORKERS STRIKE ON VIDEO

he strike at CF&I/Oregon Steel is nearly in its fifth month, but some 1,100 Steelworkers and their families are more determined than ever to persevere until the company stops breaking labor laws, hiring permanent replacement workers and ignoring their demands for an industrywide contract.

The Steelworkers took that determination to the public in a television special, "Pueblo: Until It's Over." Broadcast on Thanksgiving Day in Pueblo and Colorado Springs, Colo., the show highlighted workers describing their resolve to end the company's mandatory overtime policy, which has taken a

toll on their family life.

The show also spotlighted a striker-support campaign by working people, their unions and people of conscience across the country.

The special grew out of a 10-minute video, which was mailed to every member of striking locals 2102 and 3267, as well as to other Colorado unions, the media, CF&I/Oregon Steel and business and political leaders. Copies are available from the CF&I Strike Office, 719-564-

8600.

RAGE AGAINST GUESS

hen the alternative rock band Rage Against the Machine joined UNITE's campaign to end sweatshop conditions and violations of workers' rights at Guess, Inc.'s contract manufacturers, both groups hoped the band's call for justice would reach the same audience as Guess—the young and the hip. It's working.

In December, Rage Against the Machine guitarist Tom Morello was among the more than 30 protestors—including garment workers, students and clergy—arrested at an anti-sweatshop demonstration outside a May-Robinson department store in Santa Monica, Calif. Morello's arrest and the campaign against Guess were highlighted on MTV News, on Rolling Stone and Spin magazine websites and on the most popular music page of the World Wide Web, Addicted to Noise.

"The people who listen to our music are the same people Guess is trying to sell jeans to," Morello

Hungry for Justice
hen rallies and demonstrations aren't enough to secure a living

hen rallies and demonstrations aren't enough to secure a living wage, the situation calls for even bolder action. Four Sacramento, Calif., janitors and a community activist went further last month when they held a five-day "Fast for Justice."

For two and a half years, the 200 workers at Somers Building Maintenance—Sacramento's largest cleaning contractor—have been struggling for a living wage, family health care and respect on the job, while the company has engaged in a vicious anti-union campaign, including harassment and intimidation of janitors who openly support the union.

"We have marched, protested and led delegations, but Somers does not want to listen to us," says janitor Hilda Avila. "I am fasting to show the company that we are willing to sacrifice for as long as it takes."

SEIU Local 1877 members Sonia Salazar and Gloria Villarreal, who also clean buildings for Somers, joined Avila and local activist Vicente Partida in the fast to draw public attention and support to the workers' campaign to organize a union.

Along with dozens of supporters, the fasting workers set up a "Justice Village" on César Chavez Plaza and also constructed a seven-foot "Wall of Justice" signed by hundreds of fasters and com-

munity backers.

More than 65 people, including
Art Pulaski, executive secretary of
the California Labor Federation,
took part in the fast for at least a
day, and more than 100 people
joined in a candlelight march
and vigil on the night the group
broke the fast.

Starving out injustice: Janitors staged a week-long fast to highlight their more than two-year struggle for living wages.





says. "We want people to think about the conditions of workers who make Guess clothes before they buy them."

The band appears on billboards and in other advertisements urging consumers to "Rage Against Sweatshops." The band kept up the anti-sweatshop drumbeat throughout its nationwide tour last summer, and it has also cut a 30-second radio spot for college and alternative rock stations.

The Bus Stops Here

When high school senior Sara Shomber learned that a Columbus, Ohio, school field trip would involve traveling on a subcontracted school bus, she refused to ride.

"I will not ride on a school

bus that is subcontracted," Sara asserted. "Contract buses are not safe, and the drivers are not as qualified."

Shomber, the daughter of union members, took her concerns to school administrators.

OAPSE/AFSCME Local 336 informed school officials that under the collective bargaining agreement, work must be assigned to OAPSE members. As a result, Columbus public school students now will be transported only by union drivers.

"We are all very grateful to Sara. She has demonstrated a lot of maturity for a high school senior," says Jean Cherryholmes, president of the OAPSE local. "I guess 'union' has always been in Sara's blood. Her mother drove a school bus every day during her pregnancy with Sara, and she attends a lot of union meet-

ings with her mom."

Off the bus: Proud union parents Catherine and Steve Shomber, with daughter Sara.



Union Brands for Winter

Winter means cold and snowy weather for much of the nation, with the sounds of tires spinning and snow shovels scraping at walkways. If you're preparing to tackle the elements, be sure to look for the union label on American-made products. Here are some brands of winter gear made by union members.

Snow shovels, snow pushers, Ice scrapers, roof rakes and emergency car kits: Steelworkers members make FeatherLite, ErgoConcept, SnowHawk, SnowBlazer and SnowBoss by O. Ames Co.; Boilermakers bring us SnoForce, Snow Hog, Union Brand, Razor-Back, Li'l Pal, Little Hog, Green Thumb and Yard 'N Garden by Union Tools.

Snow blowers: UFCW members make Cub Cadet models 520R, 520E, 522E, 724E, 724TE, 926E, 926TE and 1030E; UAW members make Lawn Boy models 120R, 320e, 320r and 522r; Steelworkers members produce Snapper Industrial Products models LE317R, LE319R, 15223 and 16223 and Modern Line Products models 317E152 and 317140;

Machinists members make John Deere models TR521, TR522, 524D, 826D, 828D and 1032D, Simplicity Mfg., Inc., models 520E, 520M, 555E, 755E, 860E, 970M and 1080M, and Toro Co. models 622, 724, 824, 824XL, 1028, 1232, CCR Powerlite, CCR 2400, CCR 2500, CCR 3000GTS, 1200 and 1800.

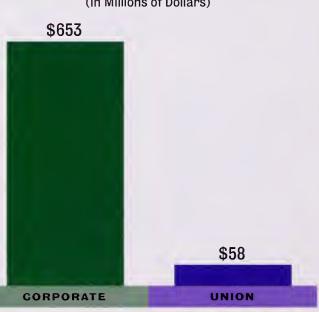
Anti-freeze: Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers produce Prestone by Industrial Terminal Systems; Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers make Pennzoil by Pennzoil Co.

Snow and all-season thres: All of the following brands are made for the various manufacturers by the Steelworkers: Bridgestone Tires models Potenza RE940, RE930, RE920 and RE900; Blizzak; WT-05; WT-14; Dueler HT and Dueler AT; Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. brands Lifeliner Classic II, Classic STE; Trendsetter A/W Radial, Trendsetter SE, Discoverer Radial AST, STT and LT; Dayton brand Widetrack Wintertrax; Denman Tire Corp. brands Express and Ground Hawg II; Dunlop Tire Corp. brands SP Sport 4000,

D60A2 JLB, GT Qualifier S, SP40, Graspic HS1/HS2, Winter Sport M2, Radial Rover P-Metric, Radial Rover A/T and RV; Firestone Tire & Rubber brands Firehawk SVX, SH30, GTA, LH, FTX, FTX02 and SS10; WinterFire, FT70C, FR480 and FR680; Radial ATXII and Wilderness H/T; General Tire brands Ameri*Plus; XP 2000 V4; Ameri*550 AS; Grabber MT, ST and AP; Uniroyal/ BFGoodrich Tire Co. brand Comp T/A ZR4, VR4, HR4; Radial T/A; Trail T/A; Long Trail T/A; Goodyear Tire & Rubber brand Eagle Aquatred, RS-A, GT+4, GT II, ST, ST Championship Edition; Invicta; Invicta GL; Wingfoot; Infinitred; Regatta; Wrangler Radial, Radial AT, Radial RT/S and Radial AP; Wrangler GS-A, AT/S and Aquatred; Kelly-Springfield Tires brands Aqua Tour; Navigator 800S; Aqua Mark; Explorer; Celebrity; Metric 600T, Kelly Metric; Wintermark Steel Radial HT; Pacemark High Traction Steel Radial GTR; Sumitomo brand HTR 4; Yokohama Rubber Co., Ltd., brands AVS \$4-Z/\$4-V; AVS U+4; AVID H4/V4; Guardex 600; Geolander H/T, A/T; SD05 Super Digger; Y826 Super Digger and Y811. @

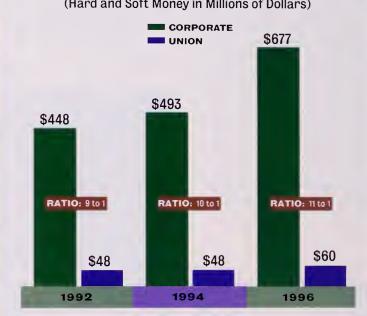
1996 Corporate Political Contributions vs. Union Political Contributions

(In Millions of Dollars)



Total Corporate and Union Contributions

(Hard and Soft Money in Millions of Dollars)



Corporate Campaign Spending Outpaces Unions'

hile corporations are attacking working families' ability to participate in political action through their unions, corporations—not unions—have been the big campaign spenders. In the 1992 elections, corporations spent nine times as much as unions did on politics. Since then, labor boosted its spending dramatically, by 25 percent. Yet corporate spending increased even more—and now, corporations contribute at least 11 times as much as unions do. In the 1996 elections, candidates and parties raised \$1.6 billion, of which labor contributed only \$60 million. Between 1992 and 1996, corporations increased their contributions 20 times more than did unions.

Corporate Contributions Dwarf Unions'

Corporations increase their contributions 20 times unions' increase between 1992 and 1996

(In Millions of Dollars)



VIDEO

A Union Tour of Washington, D.C. Take a union tour of Washington, D.C., and see the nation's most awe-inspiring monuments and buildings through the eyes of the skilled workers who helped build and restore them. A new 28-minute video, With Our Hands, produced by the Bricklayers and Allied

Craftworkers, spans labor history, from the 100-year-old Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress to the new memorial honoring President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Also available is a Visitor's Guide and Walking Map to Outstanding Masonry Buildings and Monuments that provides information on dozens of buildings and includes operating hours and phone numbers. The video costs \$9.50, an accompanying tour map is \$2.25 and t-shirts are \$14. Buy all three for \$20. Contact BAC Tool Sales at 202-783-3788 or 800-331-1077; or write to BAC, 815 15th St., N. W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

SURFIN' THE WEB

Site Gets Kids Involved

The International Labor Organization launched a new Internet website for kids and teachers who want to learn more about child labor. Through interactive exercises, graphics and quizzes, the site lets children know how they can help put a stop to child labor exploitation. It's on the ILO's main website at www.us.ilo.org.

On the Web Against Hate

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of 180 civil rights groups including the AFL-CIO and several affiliates, set up a new website to fight hate speech on the Internet. Funded by a \$100,000 grant from Bell Atlantic, the site proves "an antidote to cyberhate," says LCCR Executive Director Wade Henderson. Included is information on affirmative action, disability policies, religious freedom issues and congressional voting records. The address is www.civilrights.org.

Safe Surfing

Life-saving safety and health information is now available on the Machinists' home page. Subjects include ergonomics, health organizations, legal issues, the environment, governmental departments and agencies and workers' compensation. The page also links to other important safety sites on the Web. At www.iamaw.org, click on health and safety.

REPORTS

Union Progress

A new study, *Changing Work in America*, describes the labor movement's successful collective bargaining and legislative efforts to expand policies that help working families cope with job demands and family responsibilities. The report, published by the Radcliffe Public Policy Institute, is available for \$10. Call 617-496-3478, or send e-mail to rppi@radcliffe.edu.

Collective Bargaining and Labor Laws
The fifth edition of Public Employees Bargain
for Excellence: A Compendium of State Public
Sector Labor Relations Laws is available from
the AFL-CIO Public Employee Department. It
provides state-by-state analyses of current laws
that govern public employee collective bargaining. Copies are \$3.50. Call the PED at
202-393-2820, or write to PED, 815 16th St.,
N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

1998 CALENDAR

Conventions, conferences and meetings of AFL-CIO international affiliates, state federations and fraternal organizations.

| DATE | ORGANIZATION | PLACE |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|
| MARCH 19-20 | AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING | LAS VEGAS |
| MARCH 26-29 | AFL-CIO FULL PARTICIPATION/CIVIL RIGHTS CONFERENCE | LOS ANGELES |
| APRIL 15-16 | AFL-CIO SECRETARY-TREASURERS CONFERENCE | NEW ORLEANS |
| APRIL 17-20 | UNION INDUSTRIES SHOW | NEW ORLEANS |
| APRIL 28-MAY 1 | PENNSYLVANIA STATE FEDERATION | PITTSBURGH |
| APRIL 30-MAY 2 | AFL-CIO EDUCATION/UCLEA CONFERENCE | SAN JOSE, CALIF. |
| MAY 11-14 | AFL-CIO LAWYERS CONFERENCE | LOS ANGELES |
| MAY 31-JUNE 3 | AFL-CIO COMMUNITY SERVICES CONFERENCE | CINCINNATI |
| JUNE 8-10 | IDAHO STATE FEDERATION | POCATELLO, IDAHO |
| JUNE 15-18 | OPEIU | CHICAGO |
| JUNE 22-25 | UAW | LAS VEGAS |
| JUNE 22-24 | MISSISSIPPI STATE FEDERATION | JACKSON, MISS. |
| JUNE 28-30 | HRDI NATIONAL CONFERENCE | ATLANTA |
| JULY 13-17 | BROTHERHOOD OF MAINTENANCE OF WAY EMPLOYEES | MONTREAL, QUEBEC |
| JULY 13-17 | BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD SIGNALMEN | CINCINNATI |
| JULY 15-21 | BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY AND TOBACCO WORKERS | LAS VEGAS |
| JULY 19-22 | CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION | OAKLAND, CALIF. |
| JULY 20-24 | I.A.T.S.E. | ONTARIO, CANADA |
| JULY 20-24 | POSTAL WORKERS | DETROIT |
| JULY 23-25 | RETAIL, WHOLESALE AND DEPARTMENT STORE WORKERS | CHICAGO |
| JULY 27-31 | LETTER CARRIERS | LAS VEGAS |
| JULY 27-31 | UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS | CHICAGO |
| AUG. 4-S | AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING | CHICAGO |
| AUG. 10-13 | STEELWORKERS | LAS VEGAS |
| AUG. 12-14 | IOWA STATE FEDERATION | WATERLOO, IOWA |
| AUG. 17-20 | WASHINGTON STATE FEDERATION | SPOKANE, WASH. |
| AUG, 17-20 | FIRE FIGHTERS | ORLANDO, FLA. |
| AUG. 31-SEPT. 1 | COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA | CHICAGO |
| SEPT. S-6 | FARM WORKERS | FRESNO, CALIF. |
| SEPT. 9-11 | SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FEDERATION | MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. |
| SEPT. 13-16 | MISSOURI STATE FEDERATION | ST. LOUIS, MO. |
| SEPT. 14-16 | MINNESOTA STATE FEDERATION | DULUTH, MINN. |
| SEPT. 21-23 | MASSACHUSETTS STATE FEDERATION | BOSTON |
| SEPT. 22-24 | OHIO STATE FEDERATION | CLEVELAND |
| SEPT. 24-2S | NORTH CAROLINA STATE FEDERATION | RALEIGH, N.C. |
| SEPT. 28-OCT. 1 | WISCONSIN STATE FEDERATION | LACROSSE, MIS. |
| SEPT. 28-OCT. 2 | AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION | CHICAGO |
| OCT. 27-29 | FLIGHT ATTENDANTS | ORLANDO |

Enlist

your members

in the

Norking only target unions for burn companies and special internal special special

In a nationally coordinated effort, corporations, rightwing foundations and anti-union lobbying groups are pushing state-by-state and federal legislation to silence the voice of working families and their unions. They want to knock working families out of our nation's political life so they can win the anti-worker laws and policies they've been fighting for: Medicare cuts, Social Security privatization, school vouchers, destruction of job safety protection and more.

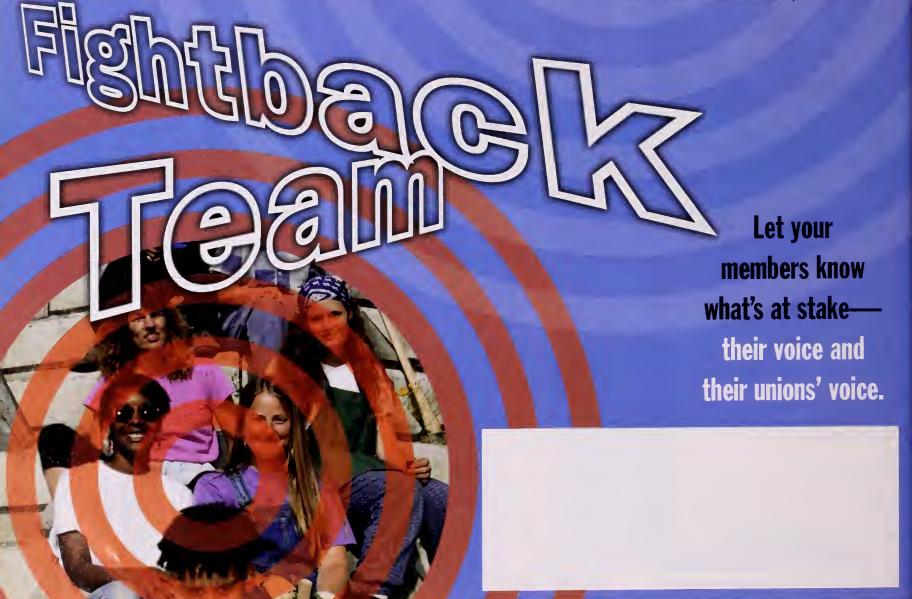
Share the facts about the so-called "paycheck protection" proposals:

 They single out unions—because unions stand in the way of the anti-working-family agenda. These proposals only target unions for burdensome requirements, not companies and special interest groups. They would give big business an even bigger political advantage over working families.

In the 1996 election cycle, corporations accounted for more than 40 percent of the \$1.6 billion raised by political candidates and parties—while unions accounted for less than 4 percent. These proposals would give corporations and right-wing special interests the whole playing field.

- Union members want their unions and the AFL-CIO to speak out about politics and legislation. By a 6-to-1 margin members support our political and issue work, according to a Peter Hart Research and Associates poll.
- Paychecks are amply protected already. No worker
 can be forced to join a union. No worker can be forced to
 help fund a union's political activity. And unions' programs
 are set by members through the election of officers in a
 democratic process.

For more information and resources for enlisting your members in the Working Families Fightback Team, call Barbara Smith in Field Mobilization, 202-637-5303.



Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists **MARCH 1998** UNION MEMBERS RUN FOR OFFICE UNION BUSTING IS BACK .



Ideas and Views From You

REMEMBER, WE'RE STOCKHOLDERS

@"Kimberly-Clark is in the process of dismantling the (Winslow, Maine) mill and taking anything of worth with them. As far as the unions, they worked hard and worked with Kimberly-Clark. The local community gave them tax incentives to stay.

"It isn't that money wasn't being made. Not enough money was being made. I find this behavior repulsive. This is the general tone of corporate America. Downsizing, wage cuts, union-busting, tax incentives, anything to increase the bottom line...it's what the stockholders want.

"....Maybe it's time for corporate America to meet the stockholders they keep talking about. I'm one of those investors, as is every union member that is a party to a pension plan. We are a very large economic force, and corporate America needs to know and understand this fact."—William Heavener, IBEW Local 1253, Augusta, Maine

WANTED: ECONOMICS EDUCATION

@"I always hear how the two-income family needs help in the form of tax breaks for child care, such as dependent care assistance. However, the truth is that the one-income family needs the help. The one-income family is not allowed this tax break, and is thus paying the taxes for the two-income child care tax break. This is grossly unfair for those families that wish to care for their own children."—Mark Hammer, Professional and Technical Engineers, Arlington, Wash.

@"I am a subscriber to America@work and enjoy it. It goes a long way toward enlightening its readers to organize and to vote intelligently. However, in my view, the publication talks down to its readers in the sense that it does not educate and inform them about the basic economic realities that they must deal with, and that we all must deal with.

"Every person needs to know that 5 percent of the very richest people are waging a class war against the rest of us while claiming that talk of class war is evil, undemocratic and un-American..."—Douglas Page, retired labor attorney, Walnut Creek, Calif.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For Common Sense Economics reports, see the May/June 1997 America@work, and watch for upcoming articles as the Common Sense Economics project builds momentum.

INSPIRED BY WORKING WOMEN

@"I am so excited to have had the opportunity to be part of the AFL-CIO's first [working women] event....I came home from that conference so enthused and pumped up....I brought home inspiration to share. I had to announce to my membership that I was taking back what I had said...about not wanting to help organize. I am not on the committee, but I have committed myself to volunteer my services."



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Internet: http://www.aflcia.arg





America@work (ISSN 1091594X) is designed to inspire and support frontline unian leaders and activists with tips, tools and news you can use in the fight ta build a strong vaice for America's warking families. It is the afficial publication of the American Federation of Lal Congress of Industrial Organizations and is issued manthly. Periodicals postage poid at Washingtan, D.C.

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Say What?

What is your union doing to stop corporate, legislative and other attacks on working families?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

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"SAY WHAT?"/HERE'S WHAT **YOU SAY**

@ "West Virginia's union members helped to elect 13 of their union brothers and sisters in Labor '96. Labor '98 sees us working hard to increase our numbers in the legislature. That's the only way we can get our message across in state government.

"Our central labor councils are working with our local unions on voter registration. The more union members we have registered, the more union members we can get elected. West Virginia's national delegation is one of the strongest in the country, and we are hoping to build upon our success in '96 to make our state government labor-friendly also.

"Our issues are basic: safe, fair and secure jobs and working conditions for everyone in West Virginia."—Margaret Jarvis, political director, West Virginia AFL-CIO

Donno M. Jablanski (Publications Director); Tula Cannell (Editor); Mike Holl, David Kameras, James B. Parks (Assistant Editars); Muriel H. Cooper, Arlee C. Green (Staff Writers). Design: The Magazine Group, Inc.

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sontents





CAUGHT IN CHILD CARE DILEMMA

> Unions respond to working parents who need quality child care—and caregivers who need a union

UNION BUSTING IS BACK

So-called paycheck protection proposals attempt to knock working families off the political playing field



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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: JIM TYNAN

Surren's

HOTROC ON A ROLL

he South has long been known for its hospitality. Now the booming New Orleans hospitality industry is gain-

ing recognition for its increasingly unionized workforce. Some 650 workers at the city's Convention Center were organized by a new council formed by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 166, SEIU Local 100 and Operating Engineers Local 406.

Orleons.

HOTROC (the Greater New Orleans Hospitality, Hotels and Restaurant Organizing Council) won the victory in late January despite ongoing anti-worker efforts by Aramark, the contractor at both facilities. Aramark, which employs the same attorney as Avondale Industries, switched election dates at the last minute; on the day the Convention Center election was held, Aramark hired temporary workers to replace (for that day only) the permanent employees eligible to vote.

But the workers saw through the employer's tactics. Convention Center workers not slated to work showed up to cast their votes, joining HERE by 237–75.

"This is a profitable industry, yet it pays poverty-level wages," HOTROC Communications Director Anita Yesho says of the New Orleans market, where one of every six workers is in hospitality. "Many of the workers qualify for food stamps even though they work. Now that they have a union, they can get a decent wage," says Yesho.

Stamping Out Child Labor

commemorative stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service Jan. 26 is a stark reminder of how far the nation has come in eliminating child labor and how much remains to be done.

The Child Labor Reform Stamp, a black-and-white photo reproduction in which a young girl works as a spinner in a New England cotton mill, recalls the days when unions worked for passage of laws barring child labor. Following decades of effort, child labor was restricted by the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act.

In 1910, more than 2 million children toiled at jobs up to 16 hours a day; in 1996, 290,000 children in the United States were employed unlawfully—59,600

younger than 14 and 13,100 of them working in garment sweatshops. More than 60 years after the FLSA was enacted, laws addressing child labor are pending again in Congress. One would ban goods made by children from being imported to the United States. A second would give consumers the option of buying goods labeled with a guarantee from manufacturers that no child labor was involved.



A Community Voice for Working Families

nion community service representatives from central labor councils, state federations, international unions and allied organizations plan to meet May 31 to June 3 at the Westin Hotel in Cincinnati to explore strategies for building a community voice for working families.

The four-day conference will include workshops on common sense economics for working families, mobilizing techniques, the national child care campaign, political and legislative activities and strike-support strategies.

The Consumer Federation of America, the Project for Working Families, the United Way and other community organizations will take part. For more information, call 202-637-5191.

Thirsty

Joint effort: Three unions ore successfully

organizing service workers in New

nion members may want to think twice about drinking Florida orange juice or Gatorade. Some companies, such as Minute Maid, blend their juice with Brazilian concentrate produced with child labor, and Gatorade soon could be made with poorly paid, nonunion labor.

More than 10,000 children younger than 14 work 14-hour days for \$3 a day in Brazil's Tabatinga region, according to a U.S. Department of Labor study. That's why Teamsters members joined Nelson Morelli, a leader of the Brazilian labor federation, in a series of January demonstrations in Florida and at the Atlanta headquarters of Minute Maid owner, Coca-Cola.

for JUSTICE

Teamsters members who work at the Oakland, Calif., Gatorade plant were out in force during the NFC playoff game in January. Their message to the public: Gatorade owner Quaker Oats is threatening to convert union jobs that

convert union jobs that pay living wages to poorpaying, temporary positions. Although Gatorade sales reached \$1.4 billion last year, Quaker already has shifted Gatorade's Oakland production to an Arizona plant staffed by temporary workers.

Juicing up: The IBT takes its Minute Maid and Gatorade campaigns to the public.



Re: Training to Organize

his MEMO just in: New York City union leaders are so hot on the Membership Education and Mobilizing for Organizing (MEMO) program that they've held their second training session in less than six months.

A cross-section of nearly 50 union leaders attended a January MEMO training sponsored by the New York City Central Labor Council and Cornell University. Participants came away so fired up they pledged to send others to future MEMOs as well as recruit members to take part in a followup train-the-trainer program in February. MEMO, a class in which trained union representatives discuss how organizing strengthens local unions, is aimed at generating rank-and-file understanding of the necessity to organize for union strength. State AFL-CIOs, central labor councils, internationals and local unions interested in instilling a culture of organizing can participate in MEMO.

"We are committed to becoming an organizing center for locals that are organizing or who want to increase their organizing component but need the resources to do so," says Brian McLaughlin, president of the New York labor council. The New York labor council will offer training sessions, meeting space and assistance in organizing campaigns and contract fights. "We are putting as much assistance as possible out there to help the locals," says McLaughlin.

The January MEMO training in New York built on the labor council's first session last fall, in which 46 leaders attended. Twenty-six completed a trainthe-trainer program held after the first session.

VICTORY FOR FRONTIER STRIKERS

fter six years, four months and 10 days on the picket line, Frontier Hotel workers in Las Vegas walked proudly back to their jobs at 12:01 a.m. on Feb. 1 after being forced to strike in September 1991.

Led by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Nevada Gov. Bob Miller and hundreds of supporters, the workers celebrated under the hotel's marquee, which proclaimed: "Everyone Welcome. Strike's Over."

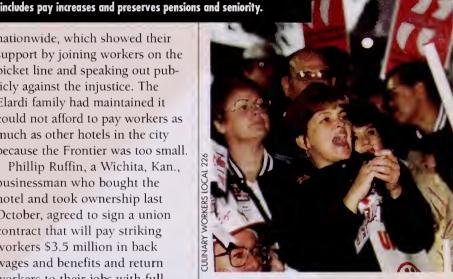
"We lasted one day longer than the Elardis because of the help and support we received from organized labor around the country," says Ray "Bubba" Turner, a 28-year Frontier employee who is now back at work. Turner and other union members walked out when the hotel's former owners, the Elardi family, tried to slash benefits, pensions and wages and refused to negotiate with the Hotel **Employees and Restaurant** Employees, the Carpenters, Teamsters and Operating Engineers. What began as a few-days walkout turned into the nation's longest strike, and drew the support of unions and community groups

nationwide, which showed their support by joining workers on the picket line and speaking out publicly against the injustice. The Elardi family had maintained it could not afford to pay workers as much as other hotels in the city because the Frontier was too small.

Celebratian: Striking Frantier warkers now have a new contract that

Phillip Ruffin, a Wichita, Kan., businessman who bought the hotel and took ownership last October, agreed to sign a union contract that will pay striking workers \$3.5 million in back wages and benefits and return workers to their jobs with full

seniority and pensions intact. The new contract calls for a starting wage of \$7.50 an hour for food servers, \$9.50 for hotel maids and \$12 for cooks. Striking workers were averaging \$2 an hour less before the strike started.



Worth the wait: Culinary Warkers Lacal 226 Secretary-Treasurer Jim Arnald, AFSCME President Gerald McEntee, the Rev. Jesse Jacksan and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka joined Frontier workers as they returned to their jabs after more than six years an the picket line.



BUILDING A UNION MOVEMENT

ometimes building the labor movement literally means crafting it nail by nail and brick by brick. That's just what the Carpenters and Bricklayers are getting set to do with new training centers.

The Chicago and Northeast Illinois District Council of Carpenters plans to build a \$3.5 million, 35,000-square-foot training center in the Windy City. The

center will offer nine-week qualifying courses to 300 "pre-apprentices" each year. Union apprentices and journeymen also will be able to upgrade their skills at the center, which is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

A new national training and education center for the International Masonry Institute (IMI), a joint project of the Bricklayers and its signa-

tory contractors, will be located on the Ft. Ritchie, Md., Army base, which is slated to close this year. John T. Joyce, BAC president and IMI co-chair, says the five-year plan should be "held up as a model for base redevelopment."



Currents

Alaska's Street Heat

ast summer, more than 400 ground fish observers at five Alaska and Washington fish observation companies became members of the Alaska Fishermen's Union, a Seafarer's affiliate.

But despite the union election victory, the companies dragged their feet to the bargaining table. That's when union members brought some much-needed Street Heat to the city. On a snowy, 10-degree December day, more than 50 union members

marched to a hotel where the National Marine Fisheries Service was meeting to demand a fair contract and good-faith bargaining for the new union members—biologists who monitor the size, health and trends of fish stocks and provide that information to the NMFS.

Within three weeks, the joint Street Heat effort of the SIU, AFSCME, Communications Workers, Food and Commercial Workers, Laborers and Asbestos Workers resulted in signed contracts.

ORGANIZING

AFSCME In Sashwauk, Minn., AFSCME Council 65 gained 231 new members when workers at Big Lake-Monticello Hospital voted for the union. Other recent wins include 179 private mental health workers at Kreider Services in Illinois, and 65 workers at Pathways, a southern Iowa multisite substance-abuse clinic.

AFGE Some 800 workers at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, facing the possibility of being contracted out, voted to affiliate with AFGE.

IBT In Ohio, Licking County sheriff's office employees voted 104–4 for the IBT after 10 years of representation by the Fraternal Order of Police. Meanwhile, workers in Washington State's apple industry filed objections with the National Labor Relations Board after losing elections at Stemilt Growers in Wenatchee and Washington Fruit in Yakima. The companies fired and suspended pro-union

workers and threatened to close the facilities and deport undocumented workers.

HERE The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees are organizing from the rivers of St. Louis to the skies over the nation's capital, recently signing up 1,290 new members. In addition to several smaller organizing victories, HERE successfully ended its four-year organizing effort among 350 food and beverage workers at the President Riverboat in St. Louis.

IUOE Workers raced to vote for AFSCME and Operating Engineers representation at Prairie Meadows Race Track in Des Moines, Iowa. The victory covers nearly 700 workers—one of the largest private-sector organizing wins in the state in recent years.

SEIU SEIU continues to earn its reputation as the organizing union, winning an election to represent 350 Laidlaw bus drivers assigned to the Hartford, Conn., public schools.

Working Families Forums Create Blueprint for Action

n a half-a-dozen forums around the country in February and March, more than 2,500 union members and their families met with AFL-CIO President John Sweeney to talk about issues key to their lives. Workers in Atlanta discussed their fears about cuts in pensions and health care. In Hartford, Conn., trade unionists expressed their outrage about corporate assaults on their right-to-organize efforts, while in Toledo, Ohio, families said wages aren't keeping up with the cost of living

These rank-and-file concerns, combined with worksite surveys and a nationwide poll of working families by Peter D. Hart Associates, will form the foundation of a Working Families Agenda for action in Congress this year, in the upcoming elec-

tions and beyond. The broad outlines include:

- Making health care affordable and increasing health care quality.
- Strengthening Social Security and expanding pensions.
- Ensuring fair wages, especially equal pay for women, raising the minimum wage and expanding wages and benefits for part-time workers.
- Restoring workers' right to organize to improve their lives.

In Kansas City, Mo., Sweeney told 300 activists at the Fire Fighters Local 42 union hall that the union movement's success in restoring the voice of working families on the job, in communities and at all levels of government is the result of "the new energy and activism of millions of union members doing their share of the grassroots work."





On the oir: Oklohomo workers get the union message out statewide.

OUT FRONT

them care for their families, uphold professional standards at work and gain a voice on the job.

The new campaign, part of the AFL-CIO's overall effort to "reposition" the public's perception of unions, is also bolstering workers' legislative efforts. More than 1.400 workers crowded on the capitol steps on the opening day of the legislative session in February, protesting bills that would weaken workers' compensation and silence the political voice of working families. Oklahoma is one of nearly 20 states in which outside lobbying groups are pushing so-called "paycheck protection" laws that would place one-sided restrictions on unions and make it easier for anti-worker forces to pass laws and win policies that further their agenda to privatize Social Security, cut Medicare and more.

OKLAHOMA GETS THE MESSAGE

klahoma workers launched a statewide media campaign with a key message: Today's unions improve the lives of working families and will fight all attempts to silence workers' voices.

The Oklahoma AFL-CIO launched the series of television ads in January. The repositioning ads feature a nurse and a Harley-Davidson worker who explain how belonging to a union helps

hrough issues forums around the country, as well as polls and focus groups, we've been learning about what our members want—and we're building an agenda around what we learn. Members are telling us that while the economy is looking better, they're still concerned about their futures because they're not sure where the money will come from to educate their children, keep the

family insured and retire with

financial peace of mind. We're

Want
By John J. Sweeney

What Our

Members

LL BURKE/PAGE

listening, and we're going to make sure Congress listens, too. Based on what we're hearing, our Working Families Agenda will call for:

- Making health care affordable. Seventy-five percent of union members polled in January said the cost of health coverage is a serious problem. Guess how it's gotten so serious? Employers have been shifting health care costs to working families. Medium and large companies should be picking up the bill for at least 75 percent of family health premiums.
- Improving health care quality. Seventy-nine percent of members polled said the limits managed care places on choice of doctors is a serious problem. Our members have had it with health plans telling them they can't see a specialist when they need one and rationing the amount of care—limiting hospital stays, for example—they can receive. We need federal and state laws to extend basic consumer protections to health care consumers.
- Strengthening Social Security and expanding pension coverage. We'll be working with retiree groups, employers, policy advocates and the Social Security administration to determine how America can shore up Social Security so it can provide retirement security for future generations. And we'll support a variety of initiatives to help workers' savings and pensions grow. All employers with 50 or more workers, for example, should be required to offer and contribute to employee pension plans.
- Ensuring fair wages. We've got to close the gap between women's pay and men's, make the minimum wage a genuine minimum income and secure fair wages and benefits for the 30 percent of the U.S. workforce with nonstandard work arrangements.
- Restoring the right to organize. Employers have effectively stripped workers of their ability to bargain for health and pension benefits and fair wages by opposing unions—often ruthlessly and illegally. We will lead a nationwide education and accountability campaign to explain what unions mean to working families and to expose bosses' interference with workers' free choice to join together to improve their lives.

We'll be working on other working family issues, too—like education and child care and international trade policies that are fair to workers. And we won't win all these battles in one year.

But we will win them, largely because we know they're the battles in which our members want to enlist.

Puerto Rico Wins Right to Bargain

uerto Rico's 170,000 public employees won the right to organize and bargain collectively in landmark legislation passed by the Legislative Assembly and signed by the commonwealth's governor. The measure, which resulted from a long grassroots campaign by SEIU, AFSCME, and the United Food and Commercial Workers, creates a special commission to set the rules governing elections and negotiations. The victory enables workers to organize and bargain collectively over wages, working conditions and benefits.

"Dozens of people have worked diligently to get us to this day," says SEIU Executive Vice President Eliseo Medina. "Their solidarity and tireless dedication have finally paid off—and the payoff is justice for the

public employees of Puerto Rico."

Union members took part in phone-banking and visits to key legislators, while collecting more than I,000 cards from public-sector workers that urged legislators to vote for the bill.

After passing the Puerto Rico Senate, the measure was adopted in February by the House of Representatives, where hundreds of union members stayed until nearly midnight to watch the bill come to a floor

vote.

Collective oction: Puerto Rico public employees joined forces to win first-ever collective borgoining rights.



By Arlee Green and David Kameras ike many working mothers, Dionne Because employer con-Winfield, a secretary at Beth Israel tributions to the fund. Unions respond to working Medical Center in New York City, between 0.3 and 0.5 sought a quality child care program percent of the payroll, after her daughter, Danielle, was are not pooled, each born. But Winfield didn't have to committee can spend its parents who need

look far. As a member of the 1199 National Health and Human Services Employees Union, Winfield is eligible for the 1199/Employer Child Care Fund, a plan that runs child care programs and reimburses members for day care or after-school care according to their income.

Thousands of the union's lab technicians, nurses, laboratory aides and others have access to affordable child care, which 1199 works to ensure is quality care. The union makes sure educators in the programs it runs are fully licensed, qualified care-givers. And it takes special steps to ensure that children receive quality child care if parents choose outside providers, by offering education in assessing day care facilities.

The program has expanded considerably since 1989 when 1199 first set it up. Then, 16 employers participated. Today, more than 100 employers take part. A child care committee at volunteers and a management representative, assesses the child care needs of members.

facility's funding on programs it selects.

Now that she has two daughters, Winfield says she doesn't know what she would do without the program, which gives Danielle opportunities she would not have otherwise—such as day camp this summer.

"This will let her be outside," Winfield says. "Kids need some other activities in their lives, a chance to learn."

The availability of high-quality, affordable child care is a daily concern for America's working families and a growing problem for the nation. Finding high-quality care is the main child care problem cited by 62 percent of working parents who answered the AFL-CIO's 1997 Ask a Working Woman survey. Unions like 1199 have led the way in bargaining for affordable child care—while aiming to ensure care-givers

make a living wage.

who need a union.

Child care needs vary from family to family, extending beyond preschool day care. Child care encompasses before- and after-school care for children; backup care for sick children and for emergencies; evening, weekend, holiday and summer-break care; and care during nontraditional working hours.

care—and caregivers

The need has never been greater. Because of dramatic economic changes over the past 30 years:

each job site, usually made up of several union



- The number of preschool children with employed mothers grew from 9.6 million in 1990 to 10.3 million in 1994.
- Forty-two percent of today's workers are responsible for children younger than 18.
- Three-fourths of women with school-age kids worked outside the home in 1991.
- More than 14 million working people have especially hard times finding child care because they work outside the regular 9-to-5 hours. For example, only 2 percent of California's child

care centers and less than one-third of its licensed family child care homes are available evenings, weekends and overnight.

Organizing care providers

Care-givers who educate and nurture the children of working parents earn an average of \$6.89 an hour and typically receive no health or retirement benefits, according to Marcy Whitebook, co-director of the Center for the Childhood Workforce (CCW). Many get no paid

holidays, sick leave or vacation, and nearly onethird earn the minimum wage. Family child care providers who work in their homes caring for preschoolers make even less, after their longer work hours are factored in.

"Skilled and consistent care-givers are key to children's healthy development and quality child care," Whitebook says. "Without them, children suffer in their language and social development; children from low-income families are most vulnerable to high turnover and



"It's very important that we organize child care workers. Many...are single parents, h

other aspects of poor-quality child care."
Turnover among child care staffs averages about
33 percent a year, according to the CCW.

"I might as well go to McDonald's and flip hamburgers. But that's not what I want to do. I want to teach children," says Jacqueline Broadnax, a Head Start teacher in Georgia and a member of SEIU Local 1985 who helped in the union's successful organizing campaign last summer. "I need to take care of my family properly. I'm tired of living paycheck to paycheck. I want what I deserve."

Henry Nicholas, president of 1199 National Hospital Workers Union, AFSCME, couldn't agree more. "What is missing is the dignity of child care, and with that dignity comes a decent paycheck. There are teachers, counselors, and others doing this work, and I don't know any group of professionals that is as mistreated as the childcare providers."

AFSCME is examining strategies to organize

these workers on a broad basis. Neither the government nor the private sector is doing anything to raise child care workers' wages, Nicholas says. That's why "it's up to the workers themselves." Raising child care workers' wages is not different from boosting wages of health care workers, he says. "If you can organize them on a broad basis, then the employers will have to find a way to make it work."

John Johnson, executive vice president of SEIU Local 617 in Newark, N.J., supports Nicholas's view. "It's very important that we organize these workers," Johnson says. "Many of these workers are single parents, heads of households; some have come from welfare and gone back to school to get their GEDs (high school equivalency diplomas). Most are grossly underpaid."

SEIU locals around the country are responding to the need for improving the wages and working conditions of child care workers—and

Negotiating Child Care

nion-negotiated child care assistance ranges from reimbursement programs to referral services to child care centers. Each seeks to meet the growing demands of union parents for quality, affordable care for their children.

Child care funds

Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 2 in San Francisco bargained a reimbursement plan with 38 hotels that contribute 15 cents for each qualified-employee hour worked. The Local 2/Hospitality Industry Child and Elder Care Plan aids 1,200 families, reimbursing members up to \$125 a month for child care for newborns, \$60 to \$100 a month for regular child care, up to \$150 a month for elder and disabled care and up to \$400 a year for youth enrichment programs, such as piano lessons and summer camp. The program also provides a toll-free information and referral counseling line.

In New York, CWA District 1 and Bell Atlantic (formerly NYNEX) established the Dependent Care Reimbursement Fund in 1994 to provide child care refunds of \$50 a week for infants and preschool children and \$25 a week for school-age children. The fund, which covers 600 children, requires

licensed care-givers or legally operating day care centers to provide the services.

Child care centers

At the San Francisco Airport, a union-employer coalition founded Palcare, a child care center serving about 250 families. The founders, including the San Mateo Central Labor Council, worked 10 years to get funding for the center, which operates from 5 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week. They now work to keep Palcare affordable, monitor the quality of its services and ensure good wages and benefits for its teaching staff (represented by Communications Workers Local 910). Palcare's scheduling flexibility (parents can change their child care schedules on a weekly basis) requires supplementary funding from employers and the labor community.

MGM Grand in Las Vegas agreed to build an on-site child care center for children of its 3,000 employees, who are members of Culinary Workers Local 226, Bartenders Local 165 (both members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees) and Operating Engineers Local 510. A labor–management committee is working to develop the program, which will be housed in a 20,000-square-foot facility slated to open in 1999.

Resource and referral services

Employers may contract with outside agencies or handle referrals in-house. Unions without child care resources in their areas

may also want to use these services to initiate child care.

electrical Workers Local 1245 bargained with Pacific Gas and Electric Co. to establish a child care resource and referral program. Available to all employees, the program helps parents solve their child care needs, whether that means locating a child care center or finding a caregiver for a sick child. The program also offers a child care information hotline to help employees evaluate caregivers.

Tax programs

A Dependent Care Assistance Plan or Flexible Spending Account allows workers to set aside up to \$5,000 of their earnings tax free each year to pay for child or elder care, with employers paying the cost of administration.

Before- and after-school care

SEIU Local 715 and Santa Clara County, Calif., agreed to use an underutilized public school to provide before- and after-school programs for children needing extended-day care.

For a fact sheet on bargaining for child care, call the Coalition of Labor Union Women, 202-296-1200. Detailed child care bargaining objectives, prepared by the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department, are also available by calling 202-637-5041.

ds; some have come from welfare, gone back to school to get their GEDs. Most are grossly underpaid."

-JOHN JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, SEIU LOCAL 617

in turn increasing quality care—by organizing workers in Head Start programs and day care centers. Overall, the union represents 3,000 child care providers—including 250 members of District 925/SEIU—and continues to score organizing victories. SEIU Local 617 recently signed up 400 workers at the Newark Preschool Council's Head Start program and 20 workers at the Hoboken, N.J., Head Start program. The local also represents workers at four day care centers. In Michigan,

where SEIU Local 586 has been working to organize Head Start workers, the local union recently won elections for 135 workers at the Community Action Agency Against Poverty, which operates the Head Start program there. More recently, Local 586 secured signed cards from more than half of the 140 Head Start teachers, aides and food service workers in Kent County (Grand Rapids), and an election is likely this month.

But it hasn't been easy. Under the state's structure, the Head Start programs are all run differently, says Local 586 President and Business Manager Jim Skelton, which makes it hard "to get a handle on organizing them."

Child care "is usually raised as a consumer issue, but it's also a labor issue," states Denise Dowell, director of training and development for Childspace Cooperative Development, an organization that aids in forming worker-owned day care centers. "Child care workers' wages are subsidizing the costs for working families," she says.

At the state and federal levels, the focus for improving the quality of care has been on training, but while day care centers need some college-educated workers, they can't even begin to compete with the public schools for these people. "Even the best paid workers in child care are making less than what workers are paid in other jobs that don't require a college degree," Dowell says.

What child care workers need is "collective action and the benefit of people who have been doing this for years in the labor movement," she says. "With new organizing strategies and outreach to community groups and the public, labor is on the right track."

Working Together for Kids

In early January, President Bill Clinton named AFL-CIO President John Sweeney to a six-member working group to bring together success stories like that of 1199 so that the administration can pursue alternative child care solutions. That same month, Clinton unveiled an unprece-

dented \$21.7 billion proposal of state subsidies, dependent care tax credits, business tax breaks, provider scholarships and funding for after-school care, safety and Head Start. Under Clinton's plan, a family of four with an income of \$35,000 and high child care costs would pay no federal income tax.

Congress will consider several child care bills this year, with the White House proposals taking center stage. The AFL-CIO believes many of President Clinton's proposals are a good

first step. An adequate child care measure should ensure that federal money spent on child care actually results in:

- · Quality care.
- · Affordability.
- Pay for providers.
- After-school care.

Passage of a comprehensive child care bill is a key goal of the AFL-CIO's Working Families Agenda in the months ahead. The AFL-CIO's child care campaign highlights "Working Together for Kids" on May 1, when labor will focus on the need to raise the wages of child care providers. Postcards will be available for union workers to mail to their members of Congress in the coming months when law-makers consider legislative proposals on child care. To find out how to get involved in the May 1 action day or to learn what you can do to rally support for child care legislation, call the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department at 202-637-5064.

Child Care: Good for Eusiness

few companies are responding to the insistent reminders of union members that it's in employers' best interest to help meet the child care needs of their employees. One of those is MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Last November, the resort hotel agreed to build a child care center for its workers, members of Culinary Workers, Bartenders and Operating Engineers. The hotel's "cast members," as the employees are called, are the parents of roughly 4,000 children younger than 12. Cynthia Kiser Murphey, senior vice president of MGM Grand, says child care is a corporate priority. "It's important to have the best benefits," Kiser Murphey says. "You have a choice of where to work, and we want to be the employer of choice."

Jo Marie Agriesti, a HERE organizer and coordinator for the MGM organizing project, says the union members are "very excited" about the project, and several have joined a committee made up of rank-and-file members, union staff and management, which visits and evaluates day care centers.

"We want to make sure the child care center is a quality facility and that it's affordable to our members," says Agriesti. The committee plans to survey parents in the next few months and design a program to meet their needs. Construction of a 20,000-square-foot facility could be finished by early 1999.



Busting 188

any states are considering laws that would require union members to sign "permission slips" before their unions get involved in legislative and political activities. They would require unions to put complicated, bureaucratic procedures in place before dues could be used to lobby for laws that benefit working families—or even to educate and register voters.

Backers of these so-called "paycheck protection" laws claim they would give union members more say in how their dues are spent. But what they really would do is infringe upon the democratic rights of union members. Union

members set their own dues and elect their own leaders. They should be the ones to decide how their unions work.

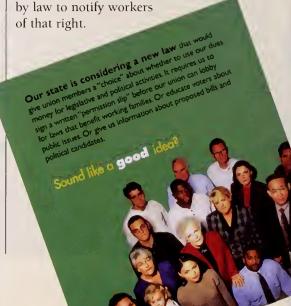
The vast majority of members approve of their unions speaking out on political and legislative issues. But union members need the facts. It's up to union leaders to make sure members hear the truth about union dues.

Can union dues be used to make contributions to political candidates and campaigns?

Under federal law and in many states, the answer is no. The Federal Election Campaign Act forbids the donation of union dues or fees to federal-level candidates or political campaigns, and many states impose the same restrictions on statelevel races. Contributions by union members to union political action committees are voluntary and made separately from their dues payments. Union dues may, however, be used for such activities as member education about the issues in elections or candidates' records, communication, voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives.

Can any worker be forced to pay for union political or legislative activities with which he or she disagrees?

No. Although polls show that the vast majority of members support their union's legislative and political activities, no worker can be required to join a union and help pay for such activities. Members may not join and choose to pay only the fees required to cover the costs of bargaining and representation. Unions are required



Encourage local union staff, stewards and organizers to distribute the following information at union meetings, work actions and events—and then plan ways to involve your members in discussions about what's at stake for working families.



"I want to know why corporations are not held to the same standards as labor unions. Corporations have no limits on in-kind donations and soft money. The so-called paycheck protection act takes the little guy like me out of the game—and I want to have a say in policies that affect my life and my family."—recgie Hohenberger, SHEETMETAL WORKERS LOCAL 33, TOLEDO, OHIO

leaders. In the union, the majority rules. And the minority of members who disagree can choose not to participate or to resign from the union and withdraw financial support for political and legislative activities.

So why do critics claim that unions are placing compulsory charges on workers to support political activities?

Big businesses and their supporters falsely claim that labor organizations are forcing employees to pay for election-related activities. The true purpose of these misleading statements is *not* to protect workers or the interests of the minority, but to silence the majority. The burdensome requirements being

proposed would effectively circumvent the will of the majority of union members who support legislative and political involvement in working family issues of their unions and the AFL-CIO. As America's unions become more aggressive in educating members, exposing the votes of elected leaders and challenging the corporate agenda, big business interests are responding with a concerted effort to restrict union members' participation in political education and mobilization activities.

When it comes to political activities, do unions have special advantages that other organizations don't?

In fact, it's quite the opposite. Like other organizations, including corporations, unions have a First Amendment right to inform, educate and express political views. But unions are subject to more stringent financial disclosure requirements than any other organizations, including corporations, the American Medical Association, the American Bar Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. If these same proposals applied to corporations, they would have to get advance permission from stockholders before spending money on politics or legislation-which is enough to paralyze any organization. And that's precisely what these proposals are designed to do to unions. When it comes to political activities, corporations accounted for more than 40 percent of the \$1.6 billion raised by political candidates and parties in the 1996 election cycle—while unions accounted for less than 4 percent. These proposals would give corporations and right-wing special interests the whole playing field.

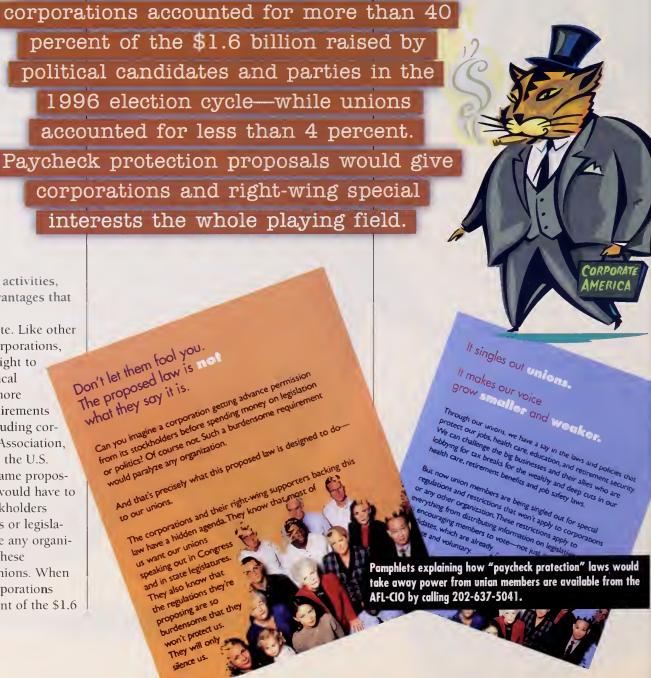
During the 1996 election year, did the • AFL-CIO raise members' dues to give \$35 million to political candidates?

No. Union leaders, elected by their members, voted to launch an AFL-CIO grassroots and media campaign focusing on working family issues—not elections. Through Labor '96, the AFL-CIO educated and organized members around working family issues such as living wages, retirement security,

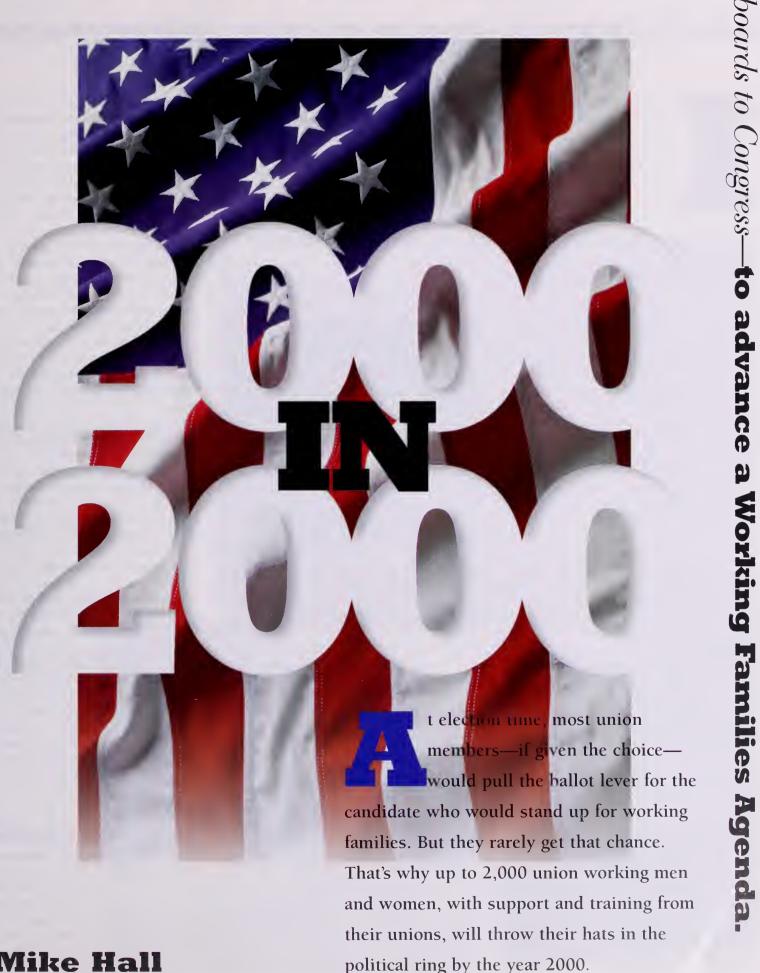
When it comes to political activities,

health care, education, job safety and workers' rights. This campaign was not funded by a membership dues increase, but rather through a reallocation

of existing resources adopted by a democratic vote among the member unions of the AFL-CIO. Union members' dues did not go up as a result. The campaign compared the voting records of candidates and shared that information with members. And the overwhelming majority of union members supported the campaign and the positions the AFL-CIO took on the issues.



Changing the makeup of government—from school



By Mike Hall

In the U.S. Congress 181 members are bankers and businesspeople, anota

f the ambulance drivers in your town wanted to join a union, who do you think would give them a fair chance to decide for themselves? A city administrator whose day job is bank vice president, or someone like Buena Vista, N.J.,

Deputy Mayor Teresa Kelly, a Communications Workers Local 1040 member and a social worker?

Say big business is attacking workers' compensation in your state. Whom do you trust more to stand up for workers? A member of the Chamber of Commerce, or Mike Caputo of United Mineworkers Local 1570 and a member of the West Virginia House of Delegates?

When right-wing extremists try to muzzle the voice of working people, who do you think will speak out for you? A right-to-work-backed lawmaker, or a state senator like Frank Weddig, of Electrical Workers Local 68 in Colorado?

Advancing a Working Families Agenda—one that includes affordable health care,

AND UP FIGHT BACK

(below) Deputy Mayor: When union members like Theresa Kelly take office, they make an impact on issues working families care about. (above) Anger into action: Outrage over the state legislature's attack on workers' compensation propelled West Virginia Delegate Mike Caputo into politics.



employer-provided pensions and a living wage for all of America's workers—depends in large part on the success of the labor movement in voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives. Bolstering those efforts will be the union members whose experience handling rent and child care—rather than stock options and limo leases—qualifies them as candidates who share workers' concerns.

At election time, most union members—if given the choice—would pull the ballot lever for the candidate who would stand up for working families. But how often do they get that choice? A look at county commissions, state houses and Congress shows that there is a long way to go before those lawmaking bodies are, by nature, worker-friendly.

In the U.S. Congress (and state and local bodies are similar) 181 members are bankers and businesspeople, another 172 are lawyers.

Women, 51 percent of the population, make up just 12 percent of the House and 9 percent of the Senate. African Americans, 12 percent of the population, account for only 1 percent of the Senate and only 9 percent of the House. It's not hard to understand why so many lawmakers favor business interests over working families—they are part of the corporate elite.

That's why the AFL-CIO and its affiliates working through state federations and central labor councils, and with the new National Labor Political Training Center, want to change the makeup of government—from school boards to Congress—to reflect working families and their interests. The Federation has set a goal of recruiting 600 union members who are willing to toss their hats into the political ring this year. Under the banner "2,000 in 2000," 2,000 union working men and women, with support and training from organized labor, could be on the ballot at the turn of the century.

"We've got to get more members into the process. It's a process of educating them so they will realize what's at stake," says Brent Boggs, a Locomotive Engineer who is serving his second term in West Virginia's House of Delegates. "If we don't get things started for 2000 now, we're setting ourselves up for failure."

In a pilot project last year, the New Jersey State Federation recruited and ran union members in 27 races, winning 18. In 1996, AFL-CIO election pilot projects won two out of three selected races in Colorado and 13 House of Delegates' seats in West Virginia. These experiences are bolstered by the success of existing programs, such as the Washington State AFL-CIO's election project that put 22 union members into the state legislature in 1996. Together, these efforts to level the political playing field prove working people can compete—and win.

No typical candidate

But what does it take for a union member to jump into a race? West Virginia's Caputo says he never had the ambition to run for political office. It was anger about the state legislature's attack on workers' compensation that propelled him into politics. Last year in Brick, N.J., a city council seat opened up, and IBEW Local 400 member Greg

are lawyers. It's not hard to understand why so many lawmakers favor business

Kavanaugh, who had tasted politics as a campaign volunteer in 1996, decided he should "give this thing a try."

On the other hand, West Virginia delegate Boggs had a pretty good idea of what he was getting into after having lobbied during the 60-day legislative session for a dozen years and served as the BLE's regional legislative director for five years. But for political novices, the idea of running for office can be "scary" says Paul Zimmerman, a Teamster, UPS driver and member of the Colorado House of Representatives.

"There's no typical representative," says Weddig, who returns to work as an electrician when Colorado's 120-day Senate session ends each year. "There are a lot of people out there who would like to get more involved." He modestly adds if he can do it, "anybody can do the job."

Running for office

The first thing a candidate needs is "the time and the energy to run a good grassroots campaign," says Margaret Jarvis, West Virginia AFL-CIO Volunteers in Politics director. "A little name recognition in the community doesn't hurt; there are a lot of coaches and community activists in local unions."

If a union member has the motivation and time to run as a candidate, tools and resources are on hand from the new National

Labor Political Training Center. In a four-day course, potential candidates learn the nuts and bolts of running for office: message development, research, campaign planning, targeting, voter contact, working with local unions and coalition building.

Even experienced officeholders like Buena Vista's Kelly, who had won two previous city council races, got something from the classes. "We went over some of the things I learned the hard way, and it gave me an easier way to run a campaign," says Kelly,

citing strategies such as narrowing the issues down to two or three main points and sticking to them in order to "stay on message."

Zimmerman, who also attended the classes after he had made a successful bid for office, says that the National Labor Political Training Center "put things into perspective...helped you learn to deal with

the press, the political agendas of your party and opponents."

"You need the skills, and that's what these classes do. We'll invest the time and training and look to you to get support from your own membership," says Laurel Brennan, secretary-treasurer of the New Jersey AFL-CIO.

Working Mother, Union Member and County Politician

Lois Cuccinello, A MEMBER OF THE PASSAIC County, N.J., Board of Freeholders, is also a working mother, business agent for OPEIU Local 32 and—according to her 1997 Republican opponents—a "corrupt union boss."

In the race for one of the three open seats on the board that governs Passaic County, the GOP opposition trotted out the tired "labor boss" lingo, ignoring the fact that since 1994, Cuccinello had served and worked with a Republican majority on the Hawthorne City Council before running in the countywide race.

"That backfired on them; it made them look like fools," Cuccinello says. "I live in a working-class suburb, but it's highly Republican. I didn't hide the fact I was a union

member...it was in all my campaign literature. I campaigned on working family issues, and that played well."

So well, in fact, that she was the second highest vote-getter on the six-candidate ballot. Cuccinello's election resulted in conservative Republicans losing control of the board for the first time in a dozen years. She credits a unified union movement and its drive to get out the vote among union members for her success. Her strong stand for working families was also key to bringing "Reagan Democrats" back into the fold.

"I've raised my kids. I've balanced my budget," she says.

New Jersey AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech led the charge in getting union people elected, she says. The state federation co-sponsored a candidate school with the AFL-CIO's National Labor Political Training Center, backed get-out-the-vote drives and provided Cuccinello with lists of voters. Volunteers from local unions including OPEIU, the Communication Workers, UNITE, Food and Commercial Workers and the Passaic County Labor Council used the lists of union members to canvass the county.

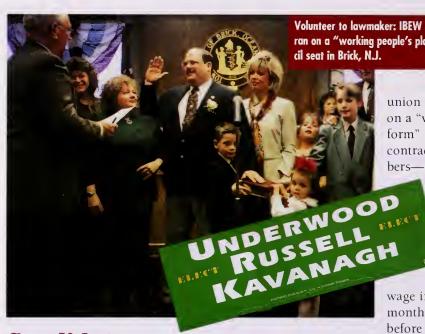
It was controversy over a local housing development that propelled Cuccinello, a 20-year union movement veteran, into running for office for the first time in 1994. That year, she won the city council seat she still holds.

She said she hopes her success can serve as an example to other members, and she stresses the importance of getting union folks elected at the local level. "The right wing took a page out of the old Democratic book and started running people for local office, and it worked. We've got to be able to locate and activate union members. Even if they don't run for office, they can be poll workers or serve on county committees."



Labor boss? Lois Cuccinello, a working mother and business agent for OPEIU Local 32, is sworn into office as Passaic County, N.J., Board of Freeholders by Rep. William Pascrell (D-N.J.).

"If we don't get things started for 2000 now, $we're\ setting\ ourselves\ \iota$



Volunteer to lawmaker: IBEW member Greg Kavanaugh ran on a "working people's platform" to win a city coun-

> union member Kavanaugh on a "working people's platform" told the council the contract-for TWU members—"was going to pass in

> > January anyway after we took office." It worked; the contract was approved, and the TWU members received a

wage increase, with 18months retroactive pay, right before Christmas. Unions' higher political profile has also given

a boost to working families and the candidates who seek to represent them. "For the most part, people are more attuned to working family issues because we have been

successful in bringing them to the forefront," says Boggs.

But there still is a long way to go. "We've got to build on the success of this last election," New Jersey AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech and

Brennan write in a letter to local unions and central labor councils. "Elect more of our brothers and sisters in the coming elections to have an effective voice on local, county and statewide issues."

"The best way to make sure we have a seat at the table is to have labor people at the table," says Brennan. "They understand us."

To find out more, or to learn how you can get involved, call the AFL-CIO Political Department, 202-637-5101. 2.

Union solidarity: Paul Zimmerman, a Teamster, UPS driver and member of the Colorado House of Representatives, credits union members' efforts for his 500-vote win.



Candidates with a union label

Does union membership benefit candidates or office holders? Zimmerman says it did for him. He credits the early union support in his district for his 500-vote win in an election where 30,000 ballots were cast. Caputo, a mine mechanic running against the president of the Marion County Chamber of Commerce, enjoyed the backing of his UMWA brothers and sisters. "They'd...take a town one day, knock on every door, and take a different town the next," he says. And when Caputo started to see support from the West Virginia State AFL-CIO, Marion County Central Labor Council and local unions in his district, he thought he could actually "pull this off." And he did-by 10 votes.

When union members take office, most find they can make an impact on issues working families care about. "I go to a lot of municipality meetings; there is a lot of antilabor sentiment there and I'm able to give that other view, educate them on how quality work and labor are tied together," says Kelly.

Weddig agrees. "I think my colleagues recognize I might have a better grasp on certain issues, like workers' comp.'

In some cases, union candidates make an impact even before taking office. Kavanaugh says that for 18 months, the Town Council in Brick, N.J., had delayed approving a contract covering city employees. But that changed when he won a council seat. The incoming majority on the council, who had joined

JOINING THE RACE TO '98

RECRUITING UNION MEMBERS IS THE FIRST step to developing union candidates in 1998 races and beyond. New Hampshire AFL-CIO President Mark Mackenzie says the state federation recently sent letters to local unions urging them to look for potential candidates. In New Jersey, the state federation has mailed surveys to all the central bodies and affiliates to identify current union-member officeholders and possible Labor '98 candidates.

Political pros like Mackenzie, who have helped give working families a voice in their states, say the best places to recruit candidates are:

- •Local union executive boards. Executive board members are more likely to understand the political process and take the initiative to run.
 - Conventions, workshops and meetings—all good places to find activists.
- •Among the ranks of retired members, who have the experience to become seasoned candidates and valued public officials, and who have the time to run.

Like II Is

On the March to STOP CHILD LABOR

hile other four-yearolds across New Mexico are enjoying "morning circle" in pre-school, Angel is pulling chilies from plants and dropping them into his mother's bucket in the fields.

On the other side of the globe, Aarti works eight to 10 hours a day in India, making 1,000 to 1,500 bricks. Aarti is seven years old.

These are just two of the thousands of children around the world who are forced to work, most for many hours every day.

These stories, and many others like them, fuel the Global March Against Child Labor, which is

sponsored by an international coalition fighting to end child labor and exploitation and promoting the rights of all children to receive an education. March supporters want an immediate end to the most exploitative and dangerous forms of child labor including slavery and slavery-like practices, forced or compulsory labor, bonded labor, work in hazardous circumstances and work in the military, prostitution, pornography and the drug trade.

The AFL-CIO, UNITE and AFT are among the march's many U.S. co-sponsors. The International Labor Rights Fund and the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights serve on the international steering committee of the march.

With children rallying under the slogan "Give Children Their Childhood," the sixmonth march began in mid-January in the Philippines with 15,000 people and will span Asia, the Americas, Africa and Europe. The U.S. leg will begin in Southern California on May 2. As the marchers cross the nation, they will join in events sponsored by local unions, religious coalitions, women's groups and child advocacy organizations, arriving in Washington, D.C., May 26 to lobby on Capitol Hill for tougher



Around the world: The six-month Global March Against Child Labar began in mid-January in the Philippines and will arrive in the United States on May 2.

legislation against child labor. The march will culminate in Geneva on June 1 to coincide with the International Labor Organization's International Labor Conference.

In February, the U.S. Department of Labor held a hearing to gather information about specific efforts to reduce child labor in countries where child labor problems have been identified. One of those countries is the United States, where a recent study by Rutgers University labor economist Douglas Kruse found that some 290,000 kids were employed unlawfully in 1996. Of those children, 59,600 were younger than 14 and 13,100 worked in garment sweatshops, defined as factories with repeated labor violations. Children also are working on farms and in mines, in homes as servants and on the streets as prostitutes and peddlers.

Current U. S. federal law bars children younger than 16 from working while school is in session. Outside school hours, children 15 or younger are barred from working most jobs, except jobs in agriculture that the Labor Department deems safe—but many employers simply ignore the rules. The Associated Press recently reported that the most extreme cases of illegal child labor in this country take place in the fields. Later this year, the Labor Department will launch "operation salad bowl" with 50 strike-force investigators spanning the country to police the harvesting of produce such as lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers and onions.

This is where a broadened public awareness can make a difference, says Labor Secretary Alexis Herman. "We will need public support to demand products be made without child labor," she says. "I hope that the march will make all Americans, indeed people throughout the world, more conscious of the predicament of many of the world's youngest citizens."

Currently, two bills addressing child labor are pending in Congress. One would ban goods made by children from being imported into the United States. A second would give consumers the option of buying goods labeled with a guarantee from manufacturers that no child labor was involved.

"It's time for businesses to step up to the plate," says Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), who sponsored the bills. "While there has been progress, there is much more that can and should be done."

Global March members are calling on employers to initiate programs that replace child laborers with adults—preferably from the same family—working for a decent wage under fair labor conditions. At the same time, they are working to make comprehensive rehabilitation and education for children freed from labor a top priority at all government levels.

Children who are unable to attend the march can show their concern and learn more about child labor through the Online March. The ILO Kids site uses interactive exercises, short quizzes and online graphics to help kids learn about child labor issues (www.us.ilo.org).

"Someday, I want my children to be treated like human beings, not like animals," said Pasqual Mares, who watched sadly as his 10-year-old daughter Laura bent over another row of cucumbers in Bowling Green, Ohio, last April. Laura and Fabiola, who is 12, work side by side with their parents, earning \$120 a week—wages Mares says his family needs to survive. "It's not right that the children work."

-Muriel Cooper



Union Tunes on the 'Net

ooking for new labor music or art? Hard Miles Music, a new record label and its website, might be the answer. Both were founded by songwriter Phil Cohen, whose day job involves organizing and directing special projects for UNITE.

The website includes five songs available in Real Audio (music can be heard with the right hardEasy listening: Union music and art are available through Hard Miles Music record label and website.

ware and software). Albums include Cohen's 1997 release, Fortunes of the Highway and the Whiteville Apparel Choir's 1996 release Together, which Cohen produced. Both albums have received extensive air play on folk and acoustic broadcasts in the United States and Europe.

The Hard Miles' website also includes union graphics and cartoons from various UNITE campaigns drawn by Patricia Ford, whose work appears in the African News Cookbook (Viking Press).

"In an increasingly high-tech business environment, it is vital that music and the arts remain at the heart of the labor movement," Cohen says.

To visit the site, go to http:// www.sunsite.unc.edu/hardmile.

Never Going to Keep Them Down

Tub-Thumping: Detroit newspaper workers struck a chord with Chumbawamba.

triking Detroit newspaper workers can relate to the lyrics from the current hit "Tubthumper," by the English band Chumbawamba: "I get knocked down, but I get up again; they're never going to keep me down." And recently, the strikers got a chance to attend the group's con-

When Chumbawamba arrived in Detroit to give a performance, band members were incensed to find out they had inadvertently granted an interview to a scab reporter at the Detroit News. Band member Alice Nutter, during a radio interview, invited all 1.300 locked-out workers to attend the show free.

cert and hear the song-for free.

Nutter also called Sue Whitall, the News' locked-out pop music writer, to apologize, and invited her and other striking workers to talk about the lockout on stage. Chumbawamba, which has frequently supported union workers, also encouraged workers to sell the striker-produced Sunday Journal newspaper during the concert. A highlight of the show was when a lead singer grabbed a "No News" sign and danced around the stage.

What the

f Mickey Mouse could read. he'd get an eyeful from the newsletter produced by union members and distributed free to workers at Universal Studios, Disney World, Sea World and Wet 'N Wild attractions in the Orlando area. The irreverent, fourpage paper, What the *#?!: Backstage in Orlando's Fantasy World, was launched late last year in a multi-union effort to shed light on corporate welfare and other Disney secrets. In its second issue, What the *#?! flayed the severance package Disney granted CEO Michael Ovitz, who received \$38 million in cash and stock options worth upwards of \$100 millionafter only 14 months at the helm.

The paper already is causing controversy. Local union members who work as groundskeepers, ticket sellers and tour guides at the sprawling fantasy lands publish the paper by SEIU Local 362, IATSE Local 631, IBT Local 385, HERE Local 737, UFCW Local 1625, IBEW Local 606, Painters Local 1010 and Plumbers Local 803. Union members outside Florida may want to check out What the *#?! on the paper's website,

www.what-the.org.

Hot Dogs, Soda and a Side of Organizing

tah building trades organizers are delivering nonunion workers a message about job safety, workers' rights and organizing—along with free hot dogs and soda for lunch.

Organizers of the Utah Building Trades Organizing Project travel to construction projects in Ogden, Provo and Salt Lake City, serving up free lunches with a side of union education. Since Utah is a right-towork state, the lunch wagon hitches up to nonunion as well as union

When the lunch brigade can't get permission from an employer to park on the jobsite, "we just set up across the street and the workers come over anyway," says Pat Eyre, president of the state building trades

council, which replaced the openhouses it held to attract new members with the traveling lunch wagon. "We found we can contact many more workers by providing jobsite lunches," he says.



A free lunch: Utah building trades boost organizing with a traveling lunch wagon.

UNION TRAINING FOR AT-RISK YOUTHS

Just got married a month and a half ago. We're struggling to get things going. We'd like to have a normal life for ourselves, our own place and a vehicle. Nothing special, just the normal things."

For Jeremy Hunt, 21, a high-school dropout, even "nothing special" is hard to come by. Making it easier for Hunt to learn the skills to find employment and get a start in life is a joint project by Laborers Local 270 and the San Ramon, Calif., city government. The Laborers' three-week training program recruits at-risk young men and women who, after they complete the training, begin their union apprenticeships with paying jobs.

The city covers the initiation fee and the weekly cost of transportation to the training center. At graduation, the local gives each student a \$240 stipend. From the first class of 11 students, eight graduated and all now have jobs, including Hunt. The success of the first class motivated the city to expand the program; 20 students will take part in the next round of training.

Now, other local unions also are looking to get involved

in the program.
For Local
270 Vice
President
Andrew
Espino, the
project is
"giving
back, in a
sense.

"My mother raised me by herself. I never thought I'd be a union vice president....There's no telling how far they can go," he says. Multimedia: Television ads and a new radio talk show broadcast the union message in Las Vegas.



Project (BTOP) is taking advantage of America's favorite pastime with its televised infomercial airing in Las Vegas. The five-minute spot shows contractors and several employees discussing the benefits of signing a union contract. Local union construction

organizers plan to use the video version of the ad and an accompanying brochure to show employers how they can "grow their business the union way to build a better Las Vegas."

The ad spotlights employers such as Jay Italiano of Bestway Tile, who is hiring union workers. "My partner and I have been together as a union company for about 90 days, and it's actually been our best 90 days in the last 10 years," says Italiano.

Employer John Beal of Glass Systems says he would like to see his competitors sign up union workers. "Right now it is not a fair playing field," says Beal, who accused nonunion organizations of trying to undercut the union companies—a practice he once employed.

Also hitting the Las Vegas air-

waves is a new hour-long radio talk show, "Back Talk." Airing on Tuesdays from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. on KSHP, the show discusses workers' rights on the job—and how to ensure they're not being violated.

"Many workers have no idea they're required to get two 10-minute breaks during the day," says Jim Rudicil, BTOP director and the show's co-host. "Who teaches nonunion workers what their rights are? We can't let those nonunion workers be on the outside. We have to help 'em."

BTOP is an alliance of the Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council's 15 local unions, which united to organize the city's 35,000 nonunion construction workers. More than 250 contractors have signed union contracts since January 1997.

UNION LINE

Plug in to Union-Made Kitchen Appliances

hen it comes to kitchen appliances, working families have a wide range of union-made options. As always, check for the Made in U.S.A. label.

Boilermakers, Machinists and Teamsters make Waste King trash compactors for Thermador— Waste King.

Machinists members produce: Rival mixers, blenders, can openers, toasters, waffle makers and cutlery for Rival Co.; NESCO, Supreme, Steam Cuisine, Open Country Campware, Empire cookware, popcorn poppers, travel coffee kits and steamers for Metal Ware Corp.; and Dazey brand mixers, blenders, juicers and other kitchen appliances.

IBEW members produce Presto pressure cookers and other appliances for National Presto Industries.

Teamsters members produce the following brand-name products: Faberware household appliances for Faberware; Norelco kitchen products for Norelco Consumer Products Co.; Mr. Coffee electric coffee percolators for Mr. Coffee, Inc.

UAW members make NuTone blenders for NuTone Inc.; and Wisco pizza, pretzel and cookie ovens and food warmers for Wisco Industries.

Paperworkers members produce Regal Ware oven, cook and gift ware and kitchen appliances for Regal Ware Inc.; and West Bend woks, skillets, popcorn poppers, coffee percolators, breadmakers, slow cookers and

potato chip makers for West Bend, Co.

UFCW members make Melitta coffee makers for Melitta USA; and Mr. Coffee coffee makers for Mr. Coffee, Inc.

The USWA and IAM produce NESCO, Travel Mate and Open Country Campware cookware, popcorn poppers, travel coffee kits and steamers for Metal Ware Corp.



he AFL-CIO continues to bargain volume-based discounts that allow unions to redirect their savings to other priorities. Unions can get these discounts on computer equipment and software, long-distance telephone services and car rentals.

Among the unions that already have seen savings are UNITE, which is saving \$50,000 to \$60,000 annually because it purchased long-distance services that enable it to connect its headquarters with field offices. Ken Miles, director of Information Technology for UNITE, also purchased a PC-based accounting program that handles all aspects of accounting, human resources, membership tracking and dues, and creates reports required by federal and state agencies. "We saved 45 percent on the cost of a half-million-dollar program," says Miles. "None of us are that strong to get that level of discount by ourselves."

The AFL-CIO is working to get the word out about the discount programs, and has announced their availability to participants at the federation's first Technology Conference, and at the roundtable meetings of affiliates' information technology directors and purchasing managers. Among discounts currently available:

• Computer hardware/software: SPENT ON Unisys offers discounts on networking ORGANIZING. products and services; Compaq and Unisys offer computers and servers and Oracle accounting software; Union Friendly Systems and TCB Associates have unionmade and union-assembled computers; Sun Micro Systems discounts its high-end computer hardware and software 30 percent; On Technology provides Internet firewalls; Lucent Technology discounts its telecommunications equipment service and installation fees; and USPC provides a 35-percent discount on computer rentals.

• Long-distance telephone services: AT&T

offers long-distance service, calling cards, teleconferencing, frame relay and paging and Internet access at discounted prices.

A DOLLAR

SAVED IS

A DOLLAR

THAT CAN BE

- Copy machines: Xerox Corp. discounts network copiers and duplicators, color printers and color copiers, fax screening systems and network services.
- Car rental: Thrifty Car Rental provides a 10-percent break on its daily rate for short-term rentals in many areas of the country.
- Copying services: Duplication and conversion of data on disks, tape or CD is available from Controlled Copy Support System.
- Office furniture: American Seating offers discounts on office furniture.
- Online services: Lexis-Nexis provides a 26-percent discount on its online computer services.

For more information, contact Pocahontas Speedon, AFL-CIO purchasing manager, at 202-637-5046.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Q: Could the AFL-CIO encourage professional athletes to endorse only products made in the United States—or, better yet, union made? Stars like Michael Jordan, Emmitt Smith, Mark Messier and Ken Griffey Jr. can have a tremendous pasitive influence on such a campaign.

A. The labor movement consistently has drawn public attention to companies that produce merchandise in developing countries to sell at high prices in this country. Workers in the clothing/textile and boot/shoe industries have been hardest hit by imports and their unions have been joined by the AFL-CIO's Food and Allied Service Trades Department and Union Label and Service Trades Department, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the International Labor Rights Fund, the National Labor

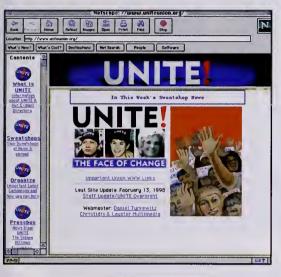
Committee and others in alerting the public about the impact of imports on U.S. jobs. Some athletes, like Michael Jordan—whose Nike contract pays him more than the combined wages of the Indonesian workers who make the shoes he backs—continue to endorse the products despite the bad publicity. Other athletes, like Green Bay Packer Reggie White, have publicly condemned companies using sweatshop labor.

Q: Some Republicans in Congress are pushing the idea that Social Security should be phased out or replaced by individually controlled retirement funds. I don't think Social Security is a good investment and it probably won't be there when I retire. So why shouldn't we go to private accounts?

A: Social Security will be there when you retire. Although there is a projected funding shortfall in about 30 years, the program would be able to pay about three-fourths of promised benefits even if no changes were made before then. Social Security is impor-

tant to all workers because it protects families by providing guaranteed, inflation-adjusted benefits in the event of death, disability or retirement. For many workers not covered by employer pension plans, Social Security is the only support they'll have when they retire. Positive steps must be taken to ensure the program remains 100 percent strong. Privatizing it by setting up individual investment accounts is no solution. This puts the investment burden on workers who could risk losing their retirement money through bad investments. The winners in this scenario would be investment brokers, not working families. A broad crosssection of individual leaders and organizations, including the AFL-CIO, is working for changes—such as an improved rate of return for the Social Security Fund—that will strengthen and protect Social Security so that it will be there for future generations.

What's your question?
Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@work,
AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.
Phone: 202-637-5010.
Fax: 202-508-6908.
E-mail: atwork@aflcio.org







SURFIN' THE WEB

If you are looking for information on sweatshops, child labor or workers' rights, check out these Internet sites:

Sweatshops

- Campaign for Labor Rights www.compugraph.com/clr
- National Consumers League www.natlconsumersleague.org
- National Labor Committee—www.nlcnet.org
- Sweatshop Watch—www.sweatshopwatch.org
- Union Label and Service Trades www.unionlabel.org

Child Labor

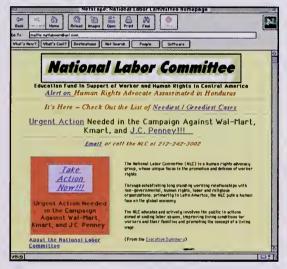
- Child Labor Coalition—www.essential.org/clc
- International Labor Rights Fund www.laborrights.com
- UNITE—www.uniteunion.org

Nongovernmental Organizations

- Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras www.pctvi.com/laamn/cjm.html
- Corporate Watch—www.corpwatch.org
- Council on Economic Priorities www2. realaudio.com/CEP/
- Jobs with Justice—www.labornet.org/jwj
- LaborNet—www.igc.apc.org/igc/labornet

PUBLICATIONS

Organizing to Win: New Research on Union Strategies examines the range and effectiveness of innovative organizing models and



their potential for contributing to a revitalized labor movement. The book includes articles by 39 labor educators, union organizers, research directors and others. The editors are Kate Bronfenbrenner, Richard W. Hurd and Ronald L. Seeber of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University; Sheldon Friedman, an economist for the AFL-CIO; and Rudy Oswald, former director of economic research for the AFL-CIO and economist at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies. Cost: \$19.95, plus \$3.50 for postage and handling. Send mail orders to Cornell University Press, P.O. Box 6525, Ithaca, N.Y., 14851-6525; or order by phone at 607-277-2211.

Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy examines the impact of globalization on the working class and how



unions are responding. The 334-page book by Kim Moody is available for \$20 from Verso, 800-233-4830; or write: W.W. Norton, c/o National Book Co., 800 Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton, Pa., 18512.

The Union Steward's Complete Guide: A Survival Manual, compiled and edited by veteran labor journalist David Prosten, provides lively details on the range of stewards' duties—from "building unity and strength" to "dealing with difficult people." The book is available for \$19.95, plus shipping and handling, from Union Communications Services Inc., which also publishes the biweekly newsletter, Steward Update. Write the UCS Order Department, 13 Francis St., Annapolis, Md. 21401; phone: 800-321-2545; e-mail: unioncomm@compuserve.com; or visit the UCS website at www.unionist.com.

This year, working women across the country are designating April 3 Egual

This year, working women across the country are designating April 3 Equal Pay Day. We're holding activities in hundreds of communities to broaden public awareness of women's efforts to achieve equal pay.

Working women earn only threequarters of what men make. That's why it takes until April 3 for women's paychecks to finally catch up to what men earned the previous year.

99 percent of women polled in the 1997 AFL-CIO "Ask A Working Woman" survey said that equal pay is important to them—and more than one-third said they don't have it. Men agree. They know that when their wives and daughters don't get equal pay, it's not just a women's issue—it's a family matter.

Together with working families, unions and their members will urge Congress to enact legislation that punishes employers that violate equal pay laws and that expands the law so that all women can get equal pay.

Join us! Here's how you can help:

- Wear a "Where's My 26¢?" sticker
- Hand out Equal Pay information at work
- Display Equal Pay signs
- Organize a rally



on the job... in the community...

n America's politics..





Yes! I want to show my support for Equal Pay.

| Send me: | Fact sheets | QUANTITY |
|----------|-------------|----------|

- ☐ Working Women Want Equal Pay signs QUANTITY_
- ☐ "Where's my 26¢?" stickers QUANTITY____
- ☐ More information

Union:

Name: _____

Address:

City/State/Zip:

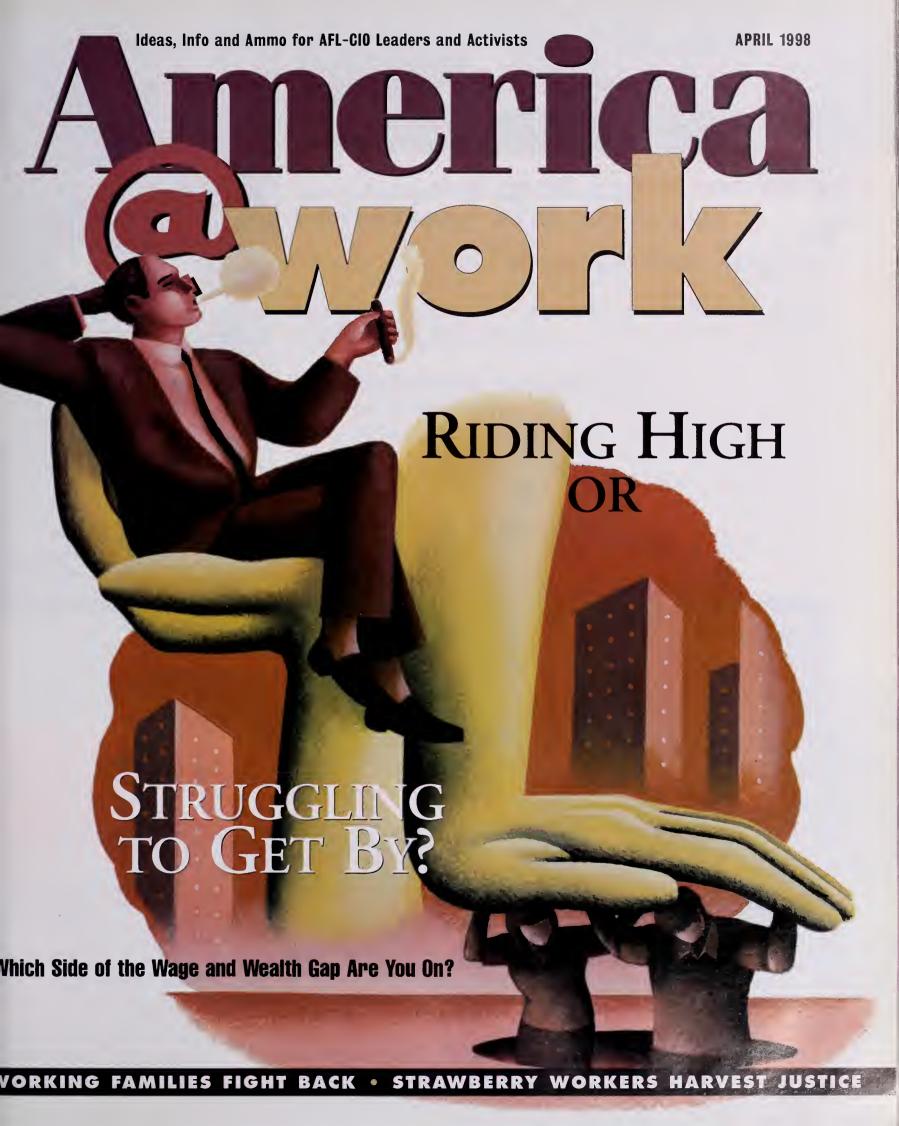
Phone:

For more information on how you can

become involved in supporting Equal Pay Day, call 202-637-5064 or return this coupon to:

Working Women's Department, AFL-CIO 815 16th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20006







Ideas and Views From You



"SAY WHAT?"/HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

@ "In response to the AFL-CIO America@work 'Say What' section in the February issue, USWA Local 67 has:

"Negotiated with management the following:

- · A Joint Safety and Health Committee that meets monthly. The local union pays the wages/lost time for the union reps to attend....
- · A joint safety program that...[established] reporting, recording, inspections, audits, communication 'systems' that piggybacked and expanded existing contractual language.
- Week-long, annual training for the union reps on the Joint Safety Committee that has in the past included five different courses at the OSHA Training Institute in Des Plaines, Ill., [and] two different courses at the School for Workers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison....All expenses and wages/lost time paid by the company.
- Annual in-house training for the union's Area Safety Reps, a total of 55...
- · Contract language that gives each employee/member the 'right to say no' to any task or job that he or she considers to be unsafe or unhealthy."—Donald E. Ogle, president, Local 67, 2334 E. 25th St., Granite City, Ill., 62040



WORKING WOMEN VOTE

"Someone recently gave me a small version of your 'Working Women Vote '96' poster....

...This poster, better than anything else I have ever seen, sums up the reasons why I am involved in politics.

"Thank you...for issuing such a wonderful piece of voter awareness."—Meghon Perkins, student, member of Northeast Missouri Labor Legislative Club, Columbia, Mo.

REAGAN'S LAST LAUGH

@ "I thought you may wish to remind your readers about what Ronald Reagan did to the air traffic controllers in view of the recent resolution by Congress to rename the Washington National Airport after Ronald Reagan.

wnen you see unions@work

and our members@work

and collective power

in our communities@work,

that's when you see

"On Aug. 3, 1981, the air traffic controllers union (PATCO), with some 15,000 members, decided to go on a nationwide strike after the Reagan administration refused to discuss any of the many significant issues the union raised at the bargaining sessions for a new contract....

"Apparently infuriated at the defeat of their expectations, the government let loose an avalanche of ferocity in a calculated attempt to break the will of the strikers....This treatment, we should note, was dealt out to one of the few unions that endorsed Reagan when he was running for the presidency."—Jack Stone, San Rafael, Calif.

INVOLVING WORKING FAMILIES (a) "I have just received my copy of America@work.... The format of the publication is wonderful, and the constant invitation to working people for their involvement is outstanding."—John Amodeo, international representative on third district staff, IBEW Local 827, N.J.

Donno M. Joblonski (Publications Director); Tulo Connell (Editor); Mike

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Holl, David Komeras, Jomes B. Porks (Assistant Editors); Arlee C. Green

Say What?

What issues should top a Working Families Agenda for the coming year and beyond?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.



America@work 815 16th St., N.W.,

Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010;

Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org



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E-moil: otwork@aflcio.org Internet: http://www.oficio.org





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 are threatening our livelihood and our future, but working

are threatening our livelihood and our future—but working families, through our unions, are fighting back

RIDING HIGH OR STRUGGLING TO GET BY?

The rich and the super rich may be riding high, but most of us face a different reality. The United States is now the most unequal rich nation in the world

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Since last summer, the strawberry workers' campaign has blossomed across the country



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COVER ILLUSTRATION: STUART BRIERS April 1998 3



Elie Ville

UNIONISTS PICK UP THE PIECES IN FLORIDA

hen weather forecasters predicted tornadoes would crash into Florida's eastern coast in February, the state AFL-CIO's disaster relief team went into action.

The day before the Feb. 24 tornadoes struck Florida, volunteers and AFL-CIO Community Services Department staff flew into Orlando. Among them was Anne Coughlin, a retired member of OPEIU, who lives in Fort Lauderdale. As labor liaison with the Red Cross, she headed up the effort to bring relief and aid to families, both union and nonunion. Operating out of the Plumbers Local 803 union hall in Daytona Beach, Coughlin and her team of more than 500 union volunteers set up a staging area for mobile Red Cross kitchens to distribute food, while volunteers operated phone lines.

Union members were on the front lines of the rescue and relief effort, especially firefighters and police. Building and Construction Trades locals helped repair homes.

"We call each other brother and sister and the union hall the house of labor," says Coughlin. "Well, in times like these, you can really see it—we truly are a family. You name any international, they all came through."

Some union members were especially hard hit. Among the 38 residents killed by the tornadoes were Gary Hallmark, a member of CWA Local 3108. Jack Driggers, a retired member of Teamsters Local 385, lost his daughter, son-in-law and grandson in the storm. Nick Frisco, president of IBEW Local 2000, lost his home. Other union members reported that their homes were damaged.



On the scene: Unionists were on the front lines of rescue and relief efforts following the tornodoes that hit Florido in Februory.

Florida is one of five states where the Federation has established a standing system to provide immediate action in case of natural disaster. In each of the five states, local unions have agreed to let the Red Cross use their union halls as headquarters for relief efforts, and each hall has been pre-wired for 30 additional phones. As soon as a disaster strikes, the union halls open up as staging areas to process volunteers and continue to serve as command centers throughout the relief efforts.

he right to organize to gain economic justice for all people is the civil rights struggle of the twenty-first century—and unions must work

to ensure a full role for workers of color, women and gays to achieve our vision of justice through organizing. That was the core message at the March 27–29 Full Participation/Civil Rights Conference, Economic Justice and Organizing for the Twenty-First Century. Meeting in Los Angeles, leaders of civil rights and women's organizations joined with representatives of AFL-CIO constituency groups to plan strategies to make full participation a reality in the workplace, in society and in unions.

The conference focused on union organizing as a way of bringing needed social and economic change to worksites and communities in the next century, and on the strategic connections between the urban agenda and union goals. Underscoring those objectives, the more than 800 conference participants joined with California strawberry work-

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND ORGANIZING

ers in a massive rally March 29 to highlight the workers' ongoing efforts to win justice in the fields.

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson,

Labor Secretary Alexis Herman and NLRB Chairman William Gould took part in a panel discussion on the rights of workers to organize without harassment, discrimination and threats. Conferees joined in workshops on immigration, affirmative action, workplace segregation, obstacles to alliance building, welfare reform, the Union Cities program, economic development and political mobilization and power.

WITNESS TO CHILD LABOR

Contains the containing that can quite prepare you for

being in the same room with children with gnarled fingers and humped backs from work," says AFL-CIO International Affairs Director Barbara Shailor, describing the conditions she witnessed during a recent visit to Thailand, the Philippines and Bangladesh. Children as young as 8 years old work in those countries' factories, making clothing for well-known companies such as Tommy Hilfiger, Gap and

Ending child lobor: UNITE Vice President Cloyol Brown, o former garment worker, speoks to women gorment workers in Docco, Bonglodesh



SOUDARITY CENTER

Levi Strauss, and for stores such as Wal-mart and Kmart.

In each of the three countries, Shailor and UNITE Vice President Clayola Brown visited union-backed projects working to free children from factories and prostitution and return them to schools.

The international crusade against child labor will be dramatized in the United States May 2–27 when the Global March Against Child Labor arrives in this country, beginning in Los Angeles, and ending in Washington, D.C. In June, children from five continents will converge in Geneva, where the International Labor Organization will convene for its annual conference. Global March participants will urge the ILO to adopt new standards to eliminate the

Justice for all: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka oddresses the Full Porticipotion/Civil Rights Conference. (Right): AFSCME Secretory-Treosurer Williom Lucy; (Left): Arlene Holt, executive ossistont to the AFL-CIO Executive Vice President.

ORGANIZING WORKING WOMEN

More women than ever are part of the workforce—and are more likely to look to organizing as a way to address inequality and injustice on the job. Developing strategies to build on this strength was among the key goals of the first-ever AFL-CIO Working Women Organize conference March 17-18 in Las Vegas. Seventy-five national organizing directors and other staff from more than a dozen unions shared organizing tactics and experiences from their campaigns, and discussed how to expand leadership training to recruit—and retain—women organizers.

"We need to make unions more women-friendly," said Kathy Casavant, UNITE executive vice president. Participants agreed that child care and other issues often prohibit women

from becoming or remaining organizers, and that unions need to find ways to support and mentor union women. Reviewing a new report that analyzes National Labor Relations Board victories

Labor Research at Cornell University, told the group that despite data showing that women are concentrated in the fastest-growing segments of the workforce and are more likely to join unions, the majority of organizing today is concentrated

"We know what it takes to win, and we're not doing it," Bronfenbrenner said.

The report, Lifting as They Climb: The Promise and Potential of Organizing Women Workers, and polling data highlighting organizing among working women, were released in a press confer-

ence following the two-day meeting. Economist Julianne Malveaux, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka also addressed the conference, which preceded the Federation's Executive Council meeting.

since the 1980s, Kate Bronfenbrenner, director of among white men.



DAVID LEE WAITE



Organizing women: MGM cocktail server and HERE activist Rachel Argenbreit was among unian leaders at the March Warking Wamen Organize canference.

ID LEE WAITE

Safety and Health Inspections Halted

a result of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's successful request for an injunction to halt a new health and safety law, all Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspections, except in the construction and maritime industries, have been effectively

Under the cooperative compliance program, which would have taken effect Feb. 17, employers with high illness and injury rates faced two choices: Sign up and work with OSHA to develop methods to identify and abate workplace hazards, or face tough inspections.

But a joint effort by the Chamber and other employer groups that have battled workplace safety standards, such as the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Trucking Association Inc. and the Food Marketing Institute, resulted in a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia that also halted OSHA's targeted inspection program. The program is aimed at employers with serious but somewhat lower injury rates.

While the court blocked implementation of the program, it did not rule on its merits and is reviewing the program. OSHA Administrator Charles N. Jeffress says the agency is

"confident that when the court does look at this award-winning program, it will agree that this proven way of reducing workplace injuries and illnesses is in the interest of both American workers and business."



SPOTLIGHT

A New Vision for Organizing

ommunity outreach, coalition building, political action—and a local union changing to organize—were the keys to a success-•ful organizing drive that signed up 350 mainly African American female school bus drivers, monitors and mechanics at Cincinnati's Laidlaw Bus Co.

The entire Cincinnati labor community came out in support of the bus drivers, who rallied around right-to-organize issues before voting Feb. 27, to join Amalgamated Transit Union Local 627. The Cincinnati Central Labor Council mobilized 200 workers and their supporters for a Street Heat rally Feb. 24, at a Laidlaw terminal. The local AFT and AFSCME affiliates, which represent teachers and school custodians, respectively, delivered letters of support to the workers during their organizing drive. The CLC contacted elected school board members, one of whom wrote a letter to the company endorsing the workers' right to organize a

The ATU also reached out to the local community. A group of 45 local clergy wrote Laidlaw's CEO asking that the workers be allowed to vote on whether to join a union without intimidation. The local NAACP also joined in support of the workers.

"We have new officers and a new vision," says ATU Executive Vice President and Organizing Director Warren George, who stressed that the union, which hasn't conducted an organizing drive in decades, would run future campaigns among employees at Laidlaw, a Canadian-based company that employs 40,000 mostly nonunion drivers.



Street Heat: Community autreach and palitical action were the keys to success far Cincinnati schaol bus drivers' organizing victory with ATU.

GARY MAUER

currents

Freight/Workers Pack op Fast Settlement

bers joined in rallies, petition drives and public outreach, strategies that helped secure a tentative national agreement for freight workers in February—seven weeks ahead of the contract's expiration date.

The new five-year contract which covers 90,000 workers at the nation's largest less-than-truckload companies, would provide wage increases totaling \$1.40 per hour over term, improvements in job security, and protections against nonunion subcontracting and company relocations to Mexico. The contract also improves pensions and grievance procedures. The pact covers Teamsters in the freight-hauling industry who are employed by ABF, Consolidated Freightways, Roadway and Yellow Freight.

Meanwhile, UPS workers in central Pennsylvania approved the last regional supplement to the UPS agreement, the final step needed to ratify the entire national pact.

"It took unity and membership involvement to win our strike last August," says Teamsters Parcel Director Ken Hall. "Now we'll continue to keep our members involved to make sure that UPS lives up to the new agreement."

TABLOID JOURNALISM

annett Corp. and Knight-Ridder newspaper groups have come up with another excuse for their failure to bargain with six locked-out unions that made unconditional offers to return to work a

year ago. Officials of the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* told an administrative law judge that the company does not have a duty to bargain because the unions operate a competing business—the *Sunday Journal*.

The tabloid-journalism claim came during a January hearing on union charges that the two companies had unilaterally changed working conditions and wages for three of the locked-out unions. The hearings resumed in March. The Metropolitan Council of Newspaper

Unions has indicated the Sunday Journal will cease production after all locked-out workers return to their jobs. Fewer than one-third of the 1,500 locked-out workers have been called back to work.

Not fit to print: Detroit newspapers claim they don't have a duty to bargain because unions are operating a competing business—the striker-produced Sunday Journal.

ORGANIZING

AFT By a 403–183 vote, the full-time faculty at Miami-Dade Community College said "yes" to representation by the United Faculty of Miami–Dade (a Teachers and Florida Education Association/United affiliate). The school is the largest community college in Florida.

HERE Honolulu Local 5 won an election for nearly 250 workers at Dai-Ichi Hotel on the Northern Mariana island of Saipan.

IAM Machinists District 15 has organized 800 of the 14,000 private-practice doctors in New Jersey. By the end of the year, the Physicians Union of New Jersey expects to sign up thousands of doctors and pharmacists and to open up negotiations with HMOs in the state. The physicians' major complaint is the extent to which HMOs have usurped the doctors' power to make medical decisions about patient care.

IBT In Baltimore, a unit of 121 warehouse workers and drivers at D.P.I–C&G Distributors won Local 570 representation.

LIUNA In Ottawa, 1,000 health workers at two hospitals voted for Laborers' representation in February. The LPNs, technicians, maintenance and other workers at Elizabeth Bruyere Hospital and St. Vincent's Hospital said yes to the Health Care Council, a LIUNA affiliate. At Daves-

Laidlaw Transportation in

Boston, 166
workers
voted
for
LIUNA
representation in
March.

ILWU At Dole Tropical Co.'s diversified fruit operations in Oahu, Hawaii, 160 workers voted to join the ILWU in March.

NABET Engineers and technicians at the National Public Radio network voted Feb. 4 to be represented by the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET-CWA). The employees work at NPR's Washington, D.C., headquarters and bureaus in New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago.

SEIU Local 1 signed up 250 janitors employed by the Chicago Housing Authority. The workers join 1,300 other SEIU members at CHA. Card-check recognition paid off for 260 workers at three Southeast Chicago nursing homes, who signed up with SEIU Local 4 in March. In Boston, a 200-worker unit of clerical staff at Boston Medical Center voted for SEIU Local 285. SEIU Local 715 won recognition to represent 135 pages who work in Santa Clara County, Calif., public libraries. The 115 LPNs, aides and maintenance workers at the Beachview Intermediate Care Facility in Keansburg, N.J., voted for SEIU District 1115 representation, while SEIU District 1199NW scored an organizing win Feb. 10 to represent 100 health care workers at Providence Home Health in Seattle.

UFCW In California, 4,600 workers at Thrifty–Rite Aid drugstores won representation rights with Food and Commercial Workers through card-check recognition. With these new workers, the union will represent 14,500 employees of the drug chain. ■



Organizing, Labor '98 Top Executive Council Agenda

he AFL-CIO Executive Council made organizing a key focus of its March 19–20 Las Vegas meeting, and unanimously approved a 1998 membership mobilization resolution committing affiliates to educate and mobilize union members around issues and ballot initiatives in upcoming campaigns around the country.

The council chose to meet in Las Vegas because, with 136 full-time organizers in the field and the combined effort of 15 unions in the Building Trades Organizing Project (BTOP), the city is fast becoming a model of how the union movement can be rebuilt by devoting more time, energy and resources to organizing efforts.

"Las Vegas is one of the most unionized cities in the nation," Blackie Evans, secretary-treasurer of the Nevada AFL-CIO, told the council. "But we won't be satisfied until all workers belong to an AFL-CIO-affiliated union."

President Bill Clinton traveled to Las Vegas the day before the council convened, and spoke to more than 1,000 cheering union members at the Carpenters' union hall. On the first day of the council meeting, Vice President Al Gore met with council members, and shared the discussion he had with Las Vegas union members who met with him for an hour. Gore assured the council the Clinton administration will oppose so-called paycheck protection acts at the state level, federal anti-salting legislation and efforts to weaken the Davis-Bacon act.

Gore said he applauds the Federation's Working Families Agenda, which supports increasing the minimum wage, fighting for equal pay and expanding health coverage for all working families.

In a moving tribute to Frontier workers, whose more than six-year strike ended in victory in February, the council honored a group of the workers and their families at the meeting.



hope each and every one of you is letting your members know what's at stake in the attempts to silence the political voice of working families.

Corporations, right-wing think tanks and anti-union lobbying groups are pushing bills and ballot initiatives in the states to require workers to sign annual written permission slips before any portion of their dues can be used for political or legislative activity. Here are a few facts every union member should know:

- These proposals will hurt working families. Unions are one of the few effective ways working people have, to speak out consistently and successfully. Individually, union members don't have a chance against well-funded corporate and right-wing attacks on the minimum wage, pensions, Social Security, Medicare, job safety protections and public education. Together, through unions, our members can and do win.
- They single out unions. Because unions stand in the way of the antiworking-family agenda, we alone are targeted for burdensome and costly new requirements. These proposals are often labeled "campaign finance reform"—but real campaign finance reform would not

Don't Let Them Silence You!



By John J. Sweeney

KINI TAKASHI/IMPACT VISUALS

limit the roles of only working families and their unions.

- They will give corporations an even bigger political advantage over the interests of working families. And corporations already outspend us on politics by 11-to-1. These proposals will make American politics an exclusive country club for companies and special interest groups—and working families will not be admitted.
- They're undemocratic. By a 6-to-1 margin, union members support our political and issue work, according to a poll by Peter Hart Research Associates. A full 90 percent approve of their unions' efforts to educate and involve them in the political process. The minority who don't want any portion of their dues used for union political and legislative work already have the right to opt out. These new hurdles aim to block the majority's will. Union members should not have a narrower set of First Amendment rights than corporations.
- They're dishonest. Despite sheep's-clothing names like "Paycheck Protection Act," these proposals aren't about helping working families—when was the last time big business fought to protect your members' paychecks? These proposals reflect a hidden agenda by corporations, conservative groups and other anti-worker interests to diminish working families' power and cut their incomes. The backers are the same people and groups that have been pushing to raid our pensions, cut Medicare, roll back job safety protections and more. They include: the American Legislative Exchange Council, developer of anti-worker legislation for conservative legislators; the Golden Rule Insurance Company and its former chair, John Patrick Rooney, advocates for Medicare medical savings accounts—which would be good for the company but would subject older Americans' health security to market risks; and Newt Gingrich and GOPAC—of which Golden Rule is a charter member.

Maybe we should be flattered that our recent victories on working family issues have spawned so many attacks (see page 12) from corporations and the right-wing. Clearly we have them worried.

They should be concerned because they're not going to win. Working families will not be silenced.

By James B. Parks

In 1997, the AFL-CIO asked more than 50,000 working women nation-wide to list their most important work issues. What do you think they answered?

- A. Health care?
- B. More leave time?
- C. Equal pay?

Almost every respondent—99 percent—cited equal pay as a high priority. No wonder. Equal pay has been the law for more than 35 years, but women still earn only 74-cents for every dollar a man earns. That's \$26 less for groceries, housing, child care and other expenses for every \$100 a man earns—for the same hours of work. It's even harder for women of color. African American women make only 67 cents and Latinas only 58 cents for every dollar a man earns.

Just ask Kiki Peppard how hard it is to raise a family on such a small salary. The single mother of two moved to Effort, Pa., a small hamlet in the Pocono mountains, four years ago. With more than 25 years' experience in office work, she felt sure she could find a good-paying job. But in her first interview for an administrative assistant job in a law office, she learned the grim truth: Women and their work are not valued. "The first question I was asked was 'Are you married?' When I said no, he asked if I had any children. When I told him I had two children, he said that women with children took too much time off taking care of their families."

The lawyer told her that as a single mother, she would be paid less because, as he said, "I'll get stuck paying your medical bills."

"He said he'd pay me more if I was married, because I would probably be covered by my husband's insurance," Peppard said. "And everywhere I went, they told me the same thing."

The maximum salary for every job she interviewed for was \$7 an hour. She now works at the local high school as a secretary. But she makes so little that her children, ages 18 and 15, qualify for the school's free-lunch program.

It's high time—past time—women got equal pay and basic benefits. The AFL-CIO is fighting for stronger laws, supporting legal actions, where appropriate, and helping to step up organizing and bargaining for equal pay.

Along with the National Committee on Pay Equity and other organizations, unions took the call for justice for Peppard and women like her to hundreds of cities on April 3, Equal Pay Day. The date was selected because that's how long it takes for a woman to catch up to a man's earnings for the previous year.

Throughout the country, members of unions and community groups, wearing stickers that asked "Where's my 26¢?" held press conferences and educational forums on equal pay, handed out literature on the pay gap between men and women, lobbied for local and state equal pay legislation and staged "Blow Your Horn" events at busy street corners to draw attention to the need for equal pay.

Who's watching our kids?

Another key concern for working women is quality, affordable child care. With the already-high costs of day care and after-school programs growing, working parents are investing plenty in child care—and believe it's time for government and business to help out.

Jo Browning of Opelika, Ala., takes the child care issue personally. When the Michelin Tire plant where she and her husband worked, moved to rotating shifts seven days a week in 1993, her children needed 80 hours of day care a week. "You can't get involved in



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE PHOTO

their school activities. It's hard for the kids to understand," she says.

Although the workers at the plant have more than 700 children younger than 12, there is no day care or home care available for the second or third shifts or on weekends. The company's attitude is decidedly anti-family. "One lady was told, 'You have to decide if you want to work at this plant or be a parent," Browning says.

Browning eventually left to become a fulltime officer at Steelworkers Local 753. But she's still deeply involved in fighting for better conditions for working families, by fighting for an end to rotating shifts—or the creation of an onsite child care center.

"That Michelin ad with the baby in the tire gives the wrong image," she says. "It gets under my skin when I see it. It makes you think they are a family-oriented company, but they're not."

What's missing in Opelika and across the country is high-quality child care, where preschoolers thrive and learn and older children are safe and supervised after school. But

care that meets high standards is hard to find.

Why isn't the quality better? Because good child care workers can't afford to stay in their jobs.

Child care workers earn less than dog groomers and parking lot attendants. No wonder the turnover rate for child care workers is three times the national average.

Working parents need help. Depending on where you live, good child care can cost from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year for one child. President Clinton has proposed a \$21.7 billion child care package of state subsidies, dependent care tax credits, business tax breaks, scholarships and funding for after-school care, safety and Head Start. The AFL-CIO believes many of the president's proposals are a good first step, but an adequate child care measure should ensure that federal money spent on child care actually results in quality, affordable care, better pay for child care workers and after-school care for kids.

Along with the Center for the Child Care

Working Women Vote! In 1996, working women voted for candidates who supported family issues at a rate 21 percent higher than men—and are well-placed to tell politicians what is important to them in 1998.

AFL-CIO FILE PHOTO

Workforce, the Federation will

sponsor a Working Together for Children national day of action May 1, when thousands of working parents will speak out across the country for better child care.

What can you and your union members do to create a high-quality child care system? Plenty.

- Join the AFL-CIO's postcard campaign to urge Congress to help parents get affordable, quality child care. Call the Working Women's Department at 202-637-5390 for copies of the Working Together for Kids brochure, which includes printed postcards. Circulate them for signatures and return them to the AFL-CIO, which will deliver the postcards to members of Congress.
- Write letters to local newspapers and television and radio stations to keep child care on the media front burner.

for Equal Pay, Quality Child Care and more

• Join in the Children's Defense Fund's Stand for Children activities June 1. For more information, call 202-234-0095.

Working Women Vote!

In the 1996 campaigns, women held the decisive vote. In 1998, it's time to make that voice heard again. "Women and people of color were the main factors in bringing about changes in Congress and moving it away from the 'Contract on America,'" says Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). "It is important that our vote is there to stop the programs that are so detrimental to working families."

ORGANIZING WOMEN: 'GOOD FOR ALL OF US'

As they juggle work and family, struggle to make ends meet and find dignity and opportunity on the job, women are the future of the union movement—and union success hinges on how well we respond to this booming workforce.

Unions are in a unique position to be a voice for all working women, union and nonunion, who want to make changes on the job, says Maida Rosenstein, organizer for UAW Local 2110, whose members include clerical staff at Columbia University

and Barnard College in New York City. By responding to working women's concerns and joining with community groups to champion the causes of women, unions build support for the labor movement, she says.

"Unions are the natural choice for anyone who wants equality," such as women and minorities, Rosenstein says. But

Maida Rosenstein to organize a large number of women successfully, "the labor movement has to be a diverse movement," she says. "We have to be seen as championing the rights of the oppressed and downtrodden." The more than 60 million working women in the United States make up almost half of the workforce and are a majority of the service sector, which is the fastest growing component of the economy.

Organizing working women and addressing family issues benefit all working people, especially union members. "Organizing new workers...reminds us of our reason for existence," Rosenstein says. "When you have an influx of new people, they come with a new enthusiasm for the principles of unions. It's just good for all of us."

In 1996, women voted for candidates who supported family issues at a rate 17 percent higher than men. For working women, the gap was even greater—21 percent. In 1998, women are well-placed to tell politicians what is important to them.

Working women need to let the politicians know that their job security is tied to the security and well-being of working families. The more voices raised, the better. That's why it's important to get as many women as possible to register to vote.

Anywhere working women gather is a good place to sign them up to make their voices heard at

the ballot box. UNITE laundry workers registered voters under a "Don't Take Us to the Cleaners" banner to spotlight the need for equal pay. SEIU members registered voters at nursing homes in a "We Vote Because We Care" campaign. A group of registered nurses handed out registration forms with flu shots to show the link between the ballot and better health care. And women in Arizona pressed their get-out-the-vote issues on ironing boards used as campaign sign-up stands.

Women and men who want to make their voices heard should join with the AFL-CIO's Working Women Vote! campaign and spread the message that women want equal pay and better, more affordable child care. The Federation, affiliate unions and partner organizations will make sure elected leaders and candidates hear working women's voices, and will provide information for working women to consider when it comes time to vote.



AFL-CIO FILE PHOTO

"Wamen and people of color were the main factors in bringing about changes in Cangress and maving it away from the Cantract an America. It is important that aur vate is there to stop the pragrams that are so detrimental to working families."

—Gloria Johnson, CLUW president

Working Women Working Together

A committee on women's issues in your union, central labor council or state federation is one of the best vehicles for speaking out for equal pay, child care and other key issues, and such a committee can help an organization focus on the concerns of working women.

The AFL-CIO national Ask a Working Woman survey shows that four out of five women believe they can improve their work situations by joining together. By joining the AFL-CIO's Working Women Working Together Network, union activists can work together for equal pay or flexible

hours, child care, after-school programs for your children, training for a new job. The Working Women Working Together Network provides useful information and the chance to work with others to make change.

For more information, or to find out how to take action, call the Network at 888-971-9797.

CLUW brings together union women and men in chapters across the country to advance issues critical to working women and their families. Its mission has been to implement four primary goals: organizing the unorganized; promoting affirmative action in the workplace; stimulating political and legislative action on women' issues; and increasing the participation of women in their unions.

For information on joining CLUW, call 202-466-4610, or fax CLUW at 202-776-0537.



EQUAL PAY ALERT

Did you know that African American women earn a median income that falls below the poverty line for a family of four? Do you know what to do if you've been discriminated against at work because you're a woman? Do you have any idea how working conditions for women around the globe compare with those in the United States?

Recent issues of the *Equal Pay Alert*, produced by the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department, address these questions and more. Activists who seek to educate members and the general public on the issue of equal pay can use the fact sheets by:

• Posting Alerts on worksite bulletin boards.

• Writing letters to the editor citing facts from *Alerts*, and then sending copies of the newsletter to employers, union officers, public officials and candidates—to let them know about equal pay.

To receive the Equal Pay Alert, call 202-637-5390.

Involving Union Members in the Endorsement Process

hen union members in North Carolina receive a letter later this spring explaining who the state fed endorses for upcoming elections—and the reasons supporting those decisions—there's a good chance they will have been part of the selection process. As a result of an effort by the North Carolina State AFL-CIO, the number of local unions and rank-and-file members involved in identifying key issues and evaluating candidates based on the issues has doubled from 1996, now involving more than 100 unionists from across the state.

"This is substantially different from the past," says North Carolina State AFL-CIO President James Andrews. "It's important to get these folks in and a part of the process."

The state fed has reached out to large and small Tarheel affiliates across the state, Andrews says. "While we're continuing to use the larger unions and staff as the core, we're including many smaller locals and rank-and-file members, too."

Making the connection between working families' concerns and the political and legislative process is critical in 1998—and beyond. Focus groups and polling conducted for the AFL-CIO by Peter D. Hart Research Associates show that while fully two-thirds of union members say it is important for unions to be involved in electing pro-worker candidates, they also believe endorsements should be based on a commitment to the issues and careful evaluation of all candidates.

"We're beginning the transition...doing a little better job of being issue-oriented rather than candidate-oriented," Andrews says.

Beyond the immediate candidate and issue selection process, involving union workers in the endorsement process also broadens opportunities for across-the-board member political involvement.

"We had a chance to go over our plans for November and say, 'This is where we need your help with voter registration, mobilizing people around these issues, getting them out to vote,'" says Andrews.

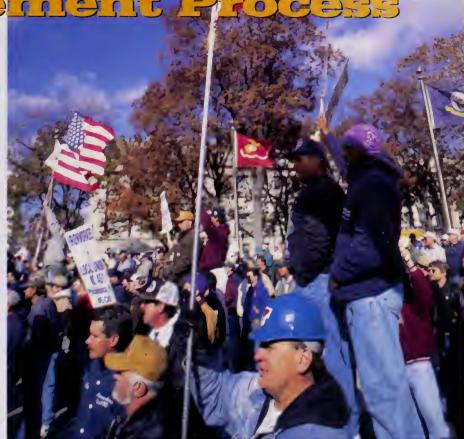
"It's a gateway," agrees Cathy Rich, president of the Union Cities—enrolled Greater Cape Fear (N.C.) Central Labor Council. "If you can show people how important politics is, there's a chance they'll not only become politically active, but get more involved" in other Union Cities priorities, such as organizing, building Street Heat mobilization, coalition outreach and community service.

The 10-county, 10,000-member CLC recommends candidates from school boards to congressional races, and counts on groups of local leaders and union members to research and interview candidates in Wilmington, Whiteville and Fayetteville.

Getting members involved

For unions trying to build greater member support for and participation in the political and legislative process, the first step is identifying union members likely to take part. One way for state feds to do this, Andrews says, is to look at lists of affiliates and activists. After the North Carolina state fed examined its union rolls, it found many members who were

active in organizing and other union-based activities—but not in politics. The state fed followed up with a survey and identified union members involved in state-level politics who were not part of the federal and judicial races where the state federation issues endorsements.



Once the state fed identified a core group of union participants, it convened a 90-member endorsement panel in Raleigh, March 5 and 6. Both days included an issues forum and time for members to question candidates. Nearly two dozen local union officers and union members also attended as observers.

"The endorsement process means very little to members if they don't understand it or have a chance to see how it works, to see how the candidates respond when we ask them about the issues," Andrews says.

In determining which issues to back in the 1998 campaign cycle, Andrews says the state fed discussed the key points it had identified and asked participants which issues were most important to their members.

"What are some other issues that connect with your members? Is it pensions? Health care? What makes sense for your union?" Andrews says he asked the panel.

But both Andrews and Rich say that first and foremost, engaging members in political and legislative issues means educating them about the connection between politics and their lives.

Rich says that generating activism is easier when you show how politics relates to education for your kids, safety on the job and health care for your family.

It also helps to point to concrete results, showing union members that their involvement makes a difference. In Cape Fear, Democrat Rep. Mike McIntyre's labor voting record was 40 percent in the first six months of 1997, but it rose to 75 percent after he met with Cape Fear unions and heard members' concerns. Noting the improvement in McIntyre's record, Cape Fear unions and their members have endorsed him for another term.

"To move a Working Families Agenda that includes affordable health care, employer- provided pensions and a living wage for all Americans, local union leaders, central labor councils and state feds must do whatever they can to politically connect and energize workers and their families," says Andrews. "Bringing more folks into the candidate endorsement process is one important step."

--Mike Hall

5 EAVISULLING

Working families are under attack across the nation. Spearable health care. Some in Congress, backed by the corpora rights. And in an effort to bust our unions, big-business-spor

Here's a look at what's ahead in 1998, and how

Political Attempts to Silence Working Families

State:

The "paycheck deception" act is on the June 2 ballot in California; similar state bills and ballot initiatives are being attempted in nearly 25 states.

Corporate:

Backers of the paycheck deception legislation include Americans for Tax Reform, whose president supports privatization of Social Security and large publicly run facilities such as airports; and John Patrick Rooney, a conservative businessman who funds political and lobbying initiatives such as reductions in state workers' compensations systems. These same corporate fat cats are pushing for Medicare medical savings accounts, tax-exempt accounts modeled after IRAs that enable individuals to pay for health-related expenses on a pre-tax basis. But MSAs take healthier, wealthier seniors out of the system, leaving Medicare with more expensive beneficiaries to cover.

Attacks on Social Security

Corporate:

Cut Social Security revenues: 81 percent of executives surveyed by the Watson Wyatt Worldwide management consulting firm, want to cut Social Security revenues by 40 percent. That money would go instead into individual 401(k) accounts—which could rise or fall with the stock market.

Increase Social Security taxes on workers: Corporate America seeks a new 1.5 percent payroll tax for the next 70 years to pay the cost of transitioning to the riskier system that will chop Social Security income in half.

Attacks on Health Care,

Federal:

Under the guise of the "SAFE Act," anti-wo.

Corporate/Federal:

Push Medicare beneficiaries into managed chealth care with medical savings accounts.

Corporate:

Get the government out of health care regul CEOs of leading health care organizations, verarket—except where they benefit.

As a result of the U.S. Chamber of Commhealth and safety law, all Occupational Safet struction and maritime industries, have been

Attacks on Public Employ

Federal:

The government has failed to live up to past those of the private sector.

Corporate:

A coalition of 70 trade associations and bust to the vagaries of private industry.

State/Local:

Efforts to privatize public services continue Public employees' political and bargaining states seek to "modify" or repeal state civil s

Politics:

12 America@work

Working people are mobilizing to beat back attempts to silence the voice of working families.

Health Care

Working families are backing bills in Congress that would expand Medicare to enable people age 55 to 64 to buy into Medicare; fighting proposed OSHA "deform" bills; and backing a Working Families Agenda that includes employer-provided health insurance.

Retirement:

Working families are championing legislation that would require employers with 50 or more employees to provide pensions is a key goat the AFL-ClO's Working Families Agenda. The eration also is examining strategies to revascula Security so that it remains sufficient funded to carry out its mission—providing a anteed safety net for retired American work.

Across the nation, unions also are working with grassroots organizations for qualit care. They seek to protect American jobs by advocating international trade policie rights—not just those of business interests. At the same time, union members are call to them through surveys and focus groups held by the AFL-CIO. Their response Agenda, a multi-year plan to build a stronger voice for working families and turn the working people's lives, in our communities and in our nation.

WORKING FAM

URANGE EN LES

ts want to slash Medicare and further limit our access to affordattempting to cut our retirement safety net and curtail our civil seek to take away our political voice in state after state.

amilies are fighting back.

nd Health and Safety

ongress would gut health and safety laws.

premiums.Replace employer-provided

are Leadership Council, a coalition of ent to stop regulating the health care

quest for an injunction to halt a new nistration inspections, except in the conas of Feb. 17.

ng federal workers' salaries in line with

for legislation to turn public services over

y in Fla., S.C., and Wisc. ing attacks at local and state level; several

Attacks on Wages, Jobs and Organizing

Corporate/Federal:

There are continued efforts to hold down the minimum wage and slow enforcement of equal pay laws to bring women's wages in line with men's.

Corporate America wants the president to push Fast–Track negotiating authority for trade agreements again.

State:

Legislatures recycle efforts to kill collective bargaining, in Colo., Okla., S.C.

Ongoing battle aims at preventing public workers from gaining collective bargaining rights in 21 states.

Attacks on Civil and Human Rights

Federa

Opponents of affirmative action are backing the Civil Rights Bill of 1997, which, despite its name, would curtail civil rights by outlawing programs that attempt to level the playing field for women and people of color.

State:

State legislative and ballot initiatives that aim to abolish affirmative action programs are now under way in Alaska, Ariz., Colo., Fla., Ga., Mich., Mo., Ohio, S.C. and Wash.

Attacks on Education

Federal:

Legislation mandating school vouchers that would transfer taxpayer dollars to private education remains a high priority for many in Congress.

es:

nership with affiliates and community rations, the AFL-CIO is supporting grass-ducation and action work that builds supgraud pay, including co-sponsoring vide Equal Pay Day Actions on April 3. The tion also will work to make the minimum genuine minimum income.

n and affordable child rantee workers'

the issues most critithe Working Families to solid gains—in

Trade:

Bolstered by last year's Fast Track victory, union members are primed to battle a new round of anti-worker trade proposals.

Organizing:

This summer, we will increase our effort to focus community attention on the faces, voices and stories of workers who are struggling to improve their lives, as well as on the war that is routinely forced on them by employers. These efforts will help organizing campaigns and help build the community strength that is vital to organizing campaigns. The effort is part of a bigger initiative to make respect for workers' futures and their choices an accepted and expected standard for employers.

Civil Rights:

In every state where affirmative action policies are under attack, union members are working with community and civil rights groups to educate the public and fight unfair proposals that would gut programs that create a level playing field for women and people of color. Nationally, workers are joining in the Global March Against Child Labor to raise the public's awareness of ongoing child exploitation, while working for passage of bills now in Congress that would enhance current child labor laws.

ESFIGHT BACK

RIDING HIGH

Struggling to Get By..

Which Side of the Wage and Wealth Gap Are You On?



By David Kameras

ack in the mid1950s, Joe Kreuser
of Menomenee Falls,
Wisc., made about
\$8 an hour—good
money in those days—working in
a UAW-organized Nash Kelvinator
plant. His wife Audrey made
about the same doing garment
piecework. Together, they could
buy a stone house for about
\$12,000, with money left over to
host dinners for Audrey's large
extended family.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVE KLUG

In 1998, their daughter and son-in-law, both in their mid-30s, each earn about \$12 an hour. They're working just as hard, and they have the same modest dreams. But they're struggling just to make ends meet.

What accounts for the difference?

We've been hearing good news about the economy. Stocks and corporate profits are up, unemployment and inflation are down. But unlike the 1950s and 1960s, the good news isn't reflected in our personal lives. Sure, the rich and the super rich-whose incomes rank

in the top 1 or 5 or 10 percentare riding high. But most of us face a different reality, because the United States has become the most unequal rich nation in the world.

The great divide separating the 1950s from today is a gap between the wealthy and the rest of us-a vast discrepancy in wages, health and retirement benefits, education and even free time. Projections indicate that by the year 2000, 3 percent of adult males in the United States will be in prison. At the other end of the spectrum, the Wall Street Journal reports that 8 million Americans live in gated communities. Voluntarily and involuntarily, we're becoming a society behind bars.

Although wages have risen slightly in the last two years, working families have not recovered from the recession of the 1980s that eroded their buying power. Not coincidentally, union membership reached its lowest point during that same period—a decline in collective power that reduced the ability of unions to make the economy work for working families. Since

declining standards of living. "Robust economic growth in recent years has done little to turn around the long-term

1973, 80 percent of us have faced largely

trend toward increasing inequality," says Kathy Larin, a policy analyst with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. "To the extent that low- and middleincome families have made gains during the recent recovery, those gains generally have not made up for the income losses suffered by



After 30 years

on the job,

Diplomat Parking

employee

Ernest Nelson

earns \$6.15

an hour.

Meanwhile

the CEO

of the corporation

that owns his

company, Monroe

Carell, has a net

worth of \$600

million, and takes

home \$1 million

annually.

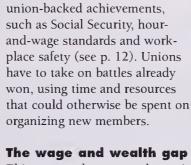
these families during the last recession."

But the wage gap is just the beginning. Many of us wonder how we're going to afford health care for our children, our aging parents and ourselves. We find our children locked out of access to a quality education. We won-

der whether we'll have enough money to retire. And with more family members working-and working longer-we have less time to spend with our families.

Unions face another challenge as wellattacks by corporate interests and the political

> leaders they have bought seeking to roll back more than a half century of pro-working family, union-backed achievements, and-wage standards and workplace safety (see p. 12). Unions have to take on battles already won, using time and resources that could otherwise be spent on



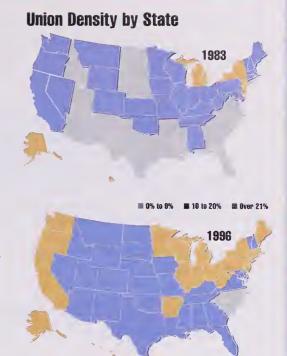
This country has seen a dramatic shift in wealth over the last quarter century. In 1976, the richest 10 percent owned half the wealth in stocks, bonds and other assets. By 1995, they owned 70 percent.

On one side of the wage gap are middle- and low-income families—workers like Diplomat Parking (owned by Central Parking) employee Ernest Nelson, who has been parking cars in Washington, D.C., for 30 years, earning the city's minimum wage, now \$6.15 an hour.

On the other side of the divide looms a huge and growing concentration of wealth, such as the exorbitant income reaped by Nelson's employer, Central Parking CEO Monroe Carell. With an annual \$1 million compensation package and a net worth of \$600 million, Carell was named by Forbes

> magazine as one of the richest people in America.

"The United States has a higher income inequality than any industrialized nation," says Rep. Martin Sabo (D-Minn.). "Although the income gap has narrowed slightly compared to its historic high point in 1993, its



Source: The Union Membership Databook; Compilation for Current Population Survey,

tremendous growth since the late 1970s must give us all pause, and Congress must look for ways to address it." Sabo has introduced a bill to cap the tax deduction for executive compensation at 25 times the salary of the company's lowest-paid, full-time worker.

The stock market's surge in recent years has meant an exponential increase in wealth for those like Microsoft CEO Bill Gates, whose net worth exceeds the gross national product of Central America. But working families haven't shared in those gains.

"The stock market boom of the 1980s and 1990s has not enriched working families for the single reason that working families do not own much stock," according to a study by economists Jared Bernstein, Lawrence Mishel

Common Sense Economics,

a new union education project, shows what's happened to working families in the economy—and how, through our unions, we can change the rules to work for working families. Developed in partnership by the AFL-CIO and its affiliates, the education project enables affiliates and local unions to boost their organizing efforts and challenge the economic status quo.

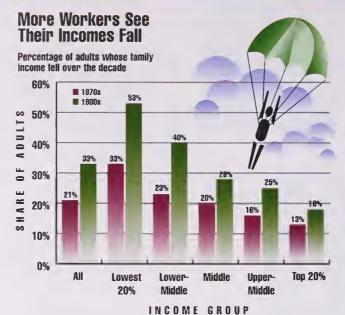
For the latest Common Sense Economics publications kit, which includes fact sheets on how unions close the gap in wages, health care, retirement, education and time, call 202-637-5185. For information about the overall program, fax a request with your name, title, union, address and telephone number to 202-508-6987.



and John Schmitt. "There is no basis for believing that the wage or income 'squeeze' on working families has been offset in any way by benefits derived from a booming stock market."

The division in wealth has physical outcomes as well. According to a study in the *American Journal of Public Health*, the lower a person's income, the higher the risk of dying—and sharp income drops, even if only temporary, can result in significantly higher mortality risks.

Wall Street cheerleaders like to point out that real wages went up in the last couple of years. What they don't tell you is that real wages last peaked in 1973. Today, we're still not back to where we were in 1989—nearly a decade ago. Eroding purchasing power cuts workers' real pay. Despite low inflation, a trip to the grocery store still means a tough stretch for the paycheck because wages haven't kept



Note: "Adults" defined as 22-48 years old at the beginning of the decade. One-fifth of all families are in each income class. The one-fifth of families with the lowest incomes are the lowest fifth. The one-fifth of families are in the highest fifth, etc.

Source: Prosperity Gap: A Charibook of American Living Standards.

pace with even modest price increases. And many basic necessities, like housing, health care and transportation, cost more than ever. The solution isn't more low-paying, no-benefit Wal-Marts—it's higher wages and better benefits for a better standard of living.

The health care gap

Central Parking CEO Carell can buy all the health care he needs. The same isn't true for Nelson or for a huge number of working families. In 1979, 71 percent of private-sector employees between the ages of 18 and 64, who worked at least 20 hours a week, 26 weeks a year, were insured either through their employers or a family member. By 1993, that

figure had dropped to 64 percent, with the biggest drop among those who had the least coverage to begin with, according to the Economic Policy Institute. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 41.7 million Americans had no health insurance throughout all of 1996, up 1.1 million from the previous year.

But even these figures don't tell the whole story. In the past eight years, employers shifted such a large portion of the cost of health insurance to workers that 8 million workers and dependents lost employer health care coverage between 1989 and 1996; 76.4 percent of the decline was due solely to rapid growth in required employee premium contributions, according to a new AFL-CIO study. Paying More and Losing Ground: How Employer Cost-Shifting Is Eroding Health Coverage of Working Families, estimates that between 8 million and 12.5 million more workers and their family members could lose coverage in the next five years. Employers paying premiums for individual workers experienced a 79 percent increase in premiums between 1988 and 1996—yet workers were hit with a 284 percent cost increase. During that same period, employers' premiums for family coverage increased by 111 percent, while workers absorbed a 146 percent increase.

The retirement gap

Retired workers look to three sources for retirement income: savings, pensions and Social Security. But the growing inequality of income and wealth means that working families are saving less, leaving them without the reserves to maintain their standard of living. According to *Prosperity Gap: A Chartbook of American Liv-*

UNIONS FILL THE GAP Making the Economy Work for Working Families

Unions improve working conditions and raise the standard of living for millions of workers. There are a few fast facts that can get that message out on organizing campaigns, in union meetings and at rallies or other actions.

- Unions lessen the inequalities of income and wealth that separate the rich from the rest of us. Union workers earn more than nonunion workers—with median wages of \$615 a week vs. \$462 for nonunion workers. For women and minority workers, the difference is even greater: Union women earn \$549 a week and nonunion women earn \$398; unionized African Americans earn \$507, compared with \$356 for nonunion workers; and unionized Latino workers earn \$484, compared with \$319 for nonunion counterparts, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, 1997 Employment and Earnings.
- Union members have more and better health coverage than nonunion workers. Eighty-four percent of full-time union workers were covered in 1993, compared with 74 percent of nonunion workers.
- Union members are more likely to be covered by pensions and to enjoy defined-benefit plans. Pension plans and the Social Security system are under attack. Unions are leading the fight to save Social Security and countering pension plan proposals that seek to shift market risks from employers to workers. (U.S. Department of Labor)
- Unions are at the forefront of battles to improve educational opportunities for all children. By working for public school funding and policy reforms that improve classrooms for all students, unions help counter the income and wealth inequality that reduces access to quality education for the children of middle- and low-income workers, particularly African American and Latino children.
- Unions enable workers to choose where and how to spend their personal time. Through lobbying and collective bargaining, unions fight to bring members more vacations, holidays, scheduling limits and other family-friendly workplace policies—an effective response to the economic challenges that are forcing parents to spend 40 percent less time with their children than they did a generation ago, and reducing their involvement in civic responsibilities. According to the 1994 PBS documentary "Running Out Of Time," one-third of those who don't vote cite lack of time as the reason.

ing Standards, the one-fifth of families with the lowest incomes have no reserves and could not maintain their standard of living by liquidating financial assets if they lost other income. Families in the lower-middle fifth could continue for about two weeks, while the one-fifth of the families in the middle of the income distribution could continue for only 3.6 months.

Yet retired workers may need their savings more than ever because of a decline in pension coverage and a shift toward market-based retirement plans. Fewer workers are covered by pensions these days—thanks in part to waves of massive corporate layoffs in which workers are terminated before they can qualify for pension benefits.

At the same time, pensions have shifted dramatically from defined benefit plans, which guarantee a fixed payment, to defined contribution plans, which put the burden of investment risk on individual workers—few of whom have the investment know-how they need.

Of all government programs, Social Security has played the most important role in increasing income equality. But that may change. Some in Congress, playing on fears about the system's long-term viability, propose creating individual Social Security accounts that, through exposure to market risk, could threaten both the security and fairness that Social Security provides. Yet, Social Security's problems can be fixed. "Social Security works because it offers universal coverage, which is another way to say, 'We're all in this

together," says John Shure, vice president of the Twentieth Century Fund, a nonpartisan progressive public policy foundation. "Certainly, some people would rake in more under privatization than they would under the current system. But others would get less, and some would lose everything—just like those who play stocks, bonds or, for that matter, slot machines in Atlantic City."

According to the Twentieth Century Fund's 1996 report Social Security, 26 percent of elderly recipients rely on Social Security for 90 percent of their total income, and for 14 percent, it's their only source of income. If Social Security were eliminated, half of Americans age 65 and older would fall into poverty.

The education gap

Education is one of our best hopes for narrowing the wage and

wealth gap over time. Educational opportunities will either lessen or increase inequalities in income and wealth.

But schools face a huge wealth gap, shortchanging the children who most need a boost. Wealthier school districts have more of everything—computers, books, field trips—further widening racial and ethnic divides. "Emergency hiring, assignment of teachers outside their fields of preparation and high turnover in underfunded schools conspire to produce a situation in which many poor and minority students are taught throughout their entire school careers by a steady stream of the least qualified and experienced teachers," according to a 1995 National Governors' Association report.

The Children's Defense Fund notes that despite lawsuits seeking fairer funding in several jurisdictions, big differences in per-student spending between wealthy and poorer school districts remain largely unchanged. And special education and language assistance costs in poor school districts have increased the divide in recent years, according to the Economic Policy

Institute.

Joining together,

members and our

unions can redirect

the nation's

economic policy.

The bottom line is

in the numbers—

numbers of union

members. Through

organizing, unions

will enable

working families to

take back the

economy—and to

bridge the divide

between those who

are riding high and

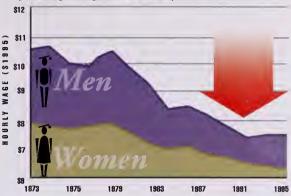
those who are struggling just to get by. Economist Richard Freeman found that a child whose family is in the top fifth of U.S. income distribution

(an income of \$128,000 per year), has an income greater than kids in 19 other advanced countries. But if the family makes \$19,680 or less, the child's real income ranks 19 out of 20. Children from low-income families are much more likely to suffer physical and mental disabilities, drop out of high school and have low achievementtest scores. African American and Latino children are disproportionately affected.

To be prepared for school, kids need high-quality early learning experiences. Yet, despite day care costs that can range from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year, quality care is difficult to find—except for wealthy families.

Young Workers Greeted With Lower Wages

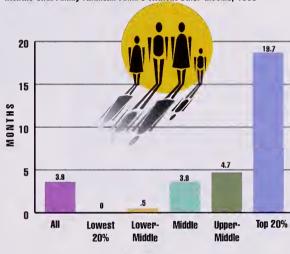
Entry-level Wages of High School Graduates, 1973-95



Note: A starting or entry-level worker has less than six years of experience.
Source: Prosperity Gap: A Chartbook of American Living Standards.

Many Families Won't Last Long on Savings

Months Until Family Financial Failure Without Other Income, 1989



INCOME GROUP

Note: One-fifsh of all families are in each income class. The one-fifsh of families wtih the lowest incomes are in the lowest fifth. The one-fifsh of families with the highest incomes are in the highest fifsh, etc. Source: Prosperity Gap: A Charsbook of American Living Standards.

According to the 1997 national survey by the AFL-CIO's Working Women's Department, 62 percent of working mothers with children younger than six, say child care is very important—yet only 13 percent of them get any child care help from their employers.

The time gap

It's tough to pass on family values if you have no time with your family. American workers put in longer hours than those in any other western industrialized country. For every 100 hours worked by a U.S. employee in 1995, his or her counterpart in the United Kingdom worked 93 hours; in Sweden, 83 hours; in France, 81 hours; and in West Germany, 76. Most European workers get four or five weeks of vacation—compared with just over two weeks in this country—and receive paid maternity leave. But while U.S. workers

at job sites of 50 or more employees are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (which provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave), FMLA provides little help to those who can't afford to miss a paycheck.

The irony is that many politicians seek to rally the public under the banner of "family values." But when middle- and low-income workers must spend more time at their jobs, often working two or three jobs to make ends meet, families are rarely together.

Instead, stagnant wages have pushed record numbers of women, many with small children, into the workforce. Even with more family members working more hours, families have not gotten aheadthey've barely kept up.

The bottom line

What will it take to close the gap in wages, health care, retirement, education and even

Union membership significantly lessens the disparities of income and wealth. The median earnings of union workers are \$640 a week, as opposed to \$478 for nonunion workersand the advantage is even greater for union women, African Americans and Latinos.

On average, union members have more health care coverage than nonunion workers, according to the Department of Labor, and are more likely to receive pension coverage. To lessen the inequality in child care, the AFL-CIO and its affiliates are working to pass laws at the state, local and national levels. Unions bargain for such benefits as paid parental leave, flexible schedules and employer-provided child care. And by pursuing legislative and collective bargaining objectives, from overtime and scheduling limits to holidays and vacation time, unions are helping workers win back time for their

Unions achieve these goals through the strength of collective action. But keeping up the momentum means organizing workers as never before. The economic and political conditions that created these gaps-in wages, health and retirement benefits, education and free time-must change. Joining together, members and our unions can redirect our nation's economic policies. The bottom line is in the numbers—of union members. Through organizing, unions will enable working families to take back the economy—and to bridge the divide between those who are riding high and those who are struggling just to get by.

Test Your Knowledge of the New Economy!



6. Part-time and temporary workers now 1. After six years of economic growth in the constitute what percentage of the U.S. 1990s, average family income is higher workforce? today than it was in 1989. ☐ Less than 6 percent ☐ 15 percent ☐ True ☐ More than 20 percent ☐ False 7. Which European country can boast one 2. We're still the richest country in the world. What percentage of American of the region's lowest rates of unemployfamilies owns 70 percent of the nation's ment and highest levels of productivity, and can also maintain the shortest averwealth? age work year of any industrial nation? ☐ 10 percent ☐ The Netherlands ☐ 2 percent ☐ 20 percent ☐ Switzerland ☐ Italy **3.** In the people's capitalism of the 1990s, the bottom 80 percent of American fami-8. Newport News Shipbuilding was forced lies, in terms of income, own what perto lay off thousands of workers after its cent of stock, mutual funds and pension only customer, the U.S. Navy, drastically cut spending at the end of the Cold War. funds? When Newport News needed additional ☐ 3 percent financing to begin building merchant ☐ 10 percent ships, who provided the money that ☐ More than 20 percent clinched the deal? 4. Name the picture-perfect American com-☐ The U.S. government pany that announced plans to lay off ☐ Wealthy Virginia business leaders more than 10,000 workers in 1997? Labor unions ☐ Time Warner ☐ Disney ☐ Kodak **5.** How many Americans have lost jobs through downsizing in just the last eight years? ☐ 6 million

Excerpted with permission from the PBS series "Surviving the Bottom Line With Hedrick Smith." Videotapes of the series are available through South Carolina ETV, Box 11000, Columbia, S.C., 29211; 800-553-7752. For the full quiz, or for more information and resources, stop by the PBS website: www.pbs.org/bottomline/quiz-i.html. The show will air at different times across the country through June; please check your local PBS station for broadcast information.

News to begin building merchant ships. financing that clinched the deal to permit Newport 8. Labor unions provided the necessary additional noisen leinsubni yne lo and it also maintains the shortest average work year of unemployment and highest levels of productivity. 7. The Netherlands has one of the region's lowest rates more than 20 percent of the U.S. workforce. 6. Part-time and temporary workers now constitute sizing in the past eight years. 5. Six million Americans have lost jobs through down-

☐ 5 million

☐ 4.5 million

families, in terms of income, owns just 3 percent of Three percent; the bottom 80 percent of American the nation's wealth. Jen percent of American families own 70 percent of .6891 ni sew ii nedi 1990s, average family income is still lower today False. After six years of economic growth in the

Kodak announced plans to lay off more than 10,000

all stock, mutual funds and pension funds.

SWers:

workers last fall.

SINCE LAST SUMMER, THE
STRAWBERRY WORKERS'
CAMPAIGN HAS BLOSSOMED
ACROSS THE COUNTRY

HARVES III (Si se puede! The momentum "is growing far change in the strawberry fields," says United Farm Workers President Arturo Radriguez, right, whose union spearheads the effart to arganize strawberry workers.

By Arlee C. Green

AUL KURODA

he strawberry season that began this month for 20,000 farm workers in California marks two separate struggles—their struggle to survive and their struggle to unionize.

The workers face another season of stooping in hot fields for up to 12 hours a day, often six days a week, picking berries from ankle-high plants for \$8,500 a season. They also face another season battling employers who seek to keep them from winning collective bargaining rights and gaining dignity and respect on the job. But carrying them through the long days as another season gets under way is the rallying cry "¡Sí se puede!" (Yes, we can.)

Backed by the entire union movement, thousands of strawberry workers gained support

of a nationwide coalition of labor, civil rights, environmental and religious groups committed to improving working conditions that can include low wages, long hours on

RINA SAPERSTEIN

Buyers beware: At the retail end of the market, strawberry workers and their supporters have been pressing national gracery chains and independent stares to support basic rights for strawberry warkers, including "five cents far fairness."

the job without breaks, unclean drinking water and sexual harassment. The momentum "is growing for change in the strawberry fields," says United Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez, whose union has spearheaded the effort to organize strawberry workers. "Strawberry workers can point to solid progress they achieved last year."

Since the spring of 1997, when the strawberry workers began their campaign for justice by seeking "five cents for fairness" (a nickel added to the price of each pint of strawberries would move strawberry workers and their families away from poverty), they have reached thousands of American workers—mobilizing in mass rallies to make the strawberry shippers and growers accountable for the strawberry workers' low wages and inhumane working conditions, seeking the support of grocery store outlets in every major city in the country, and leafleting outside retail stores, educating consumers.

As a result, some growers have provided modest pay raises to the workers, who had seen their buying power decline by 53 percent since 1985. A few are now offering medical plans and some paid vacations. The workers have seen victories in the courts as well, with workers at Coastal Berry Co., receiving \$575,000 in back pay for the time the previous owner, Gargulio, owned the company and they were forced to work off the clock. Other workers, laid off as a result of their union

involvement, won \$40,000 in back pay and were reinstated to their jobs. The



campaign also has brought about some changes in the fields—growers now often provide water and bathroom facilities. And when the UFW alleged that some growers violated California's Proposition 65, a voter-approved law requiring that field workers be notified about exposure to some toxic chemicals, they stopped using Captan, a fungicide listed by California as carcinogenic.

But the struggle for decent wages and working conditions won't be over until California's strawberry workers are protected by collective bargaining agreements that ensure wage gains and improvements in working conditions are permanent—and not offered at the whim of growers seeking to halt organizing efforts.

In February and March, a dozen farm workers visited 15 cities to tell their stories in union halls, colleges and government offices. In each city they visited, the strawberry workers led informational activities outside grocery stores that have not supported the campaign. Speaking through translators, the workers described their daily struggles. They recalled that when field workers sought to join unions in the past, their fields were plowed under in retaliation. This time around, although companies have made some minor improvement in pay and benefits, workers continue to be harassed, and union supporters are often fired, they said.

To thwart UFW organizing efforts, several growers are hiding behind a pair of front groups—the Agricultural Workers Committee and the Agricultural Workers Association—that have coerced strawberry workers, according to a lawsuit the UFW filed last August. A Santa Cruz, Calif., Superior Court judge ruled in January that the lawsuit can move forward, rejecting the groups' frivolous claim that the UFW's suit was a SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation). The judge also ordered the AWC to pay \$8,000 in attorney's fees to the UFW.

Where do you buy strawberries?

At the retail end of the market, nearly 6,000 stores, including five of the seven largest chains—Safeway, Kroger, A&P, American Stores and Yucaipa—have signed a pledge backing strawberry workers' rights. Strawberry workers and their supporters have been pressing national grocery chains and independent stores to support them in their struggle for basic rights, including "five cents for fairness."

From a 30-city Fourth of July demonstration supporting independence for strawberry workers at stores buying Driscoll strawberries, to a Christmas serenade at Terminal Market in St. Louis, to a Valentine's Day gathering at an upscale grocery chain in Washington, D.C.'s Georgetown, straw-

Here's How You Can Help in the Strawberry Campaign

As the largest U.S. strawberry shipper, whose contract growers employ 5,000 pickers—one quarter of all California strawberry workers—Driscoll Strawberry Associates effectively controls the state's strawberry fields. But some Driscoll growers have been involved in class-action lawsuits alleging violations of state and federal wage laws, or sex discrimination suits alleging their refusal to hire women in the fields until late in the season. Two federal class action lawsuits were filed against Salinas Berry Farms on charges of sexual discrimination and violation of state overtime laws. Another suit was brought against Reiter Farms, charging the grower had forced pickers to work off the clock without pay.

Eighty groups and individuals, including the National Organization for Women, the NAACP, environmentalists and clergy, formed the National Strawberry Commission for Workers' Rights last year. The commission is asking the public to show their support for strawberry workers by contacting Driscoll President Ken Morena, at 408-761-9557 or 408-761-5301. Comments also can be faxed to 408-761-1090.

berry workers maintained the momentum for justice long after the 26-week strawberry season ended.

Recently, the UFW and its supporters have conducted informational activities at Whole Foods Markets Inc., an upscale specialty grocer with about 75 stores nationwide. Not only has Whole Foods refused to support strawberry workers, the chain is leafleting its customers, alleging the strawberry workers don't want a unionclaims based on interviews with growers and supervisors, not with the workers, according to the UFW.

In February, when three strawberry workers traveled from Watsonville, Calif., to San Francisco to talk with Whole Foods managers, they "flatly refused to listen," says Sara Flocks, a UFW organizer who is working on the strawberry campaign. "They were selling strawberries at \$3.99 a pint in the store—close to the hourly wage of these workers." In Cupertino, Calif.,

Multifront coalition: The strawberry workers' campaign for justice has included the nationwide involvement of labor, civil rights, environmental and religious groups.

when strawberry workers set up an information table at Whole Foods, the store responded by giving out free strawberries. Although not all Whole Foods stores have been as anti-worker, the company's strong stand is no surprise: Whole Foods CEO John Mackey is the author of a pamphlet on achieving a union-free environment.

Beyond Watsonville

On April 29, 1997, California strawberry workers made history when 30,000 workers, union members and supporters from across the country, including such notables as actor Martin Sheen and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, packed the streets of Watsonville, Calif., in a giant demonstration of solidarity. The event in Watsonville, the heart of the strawberry region, drew nationwide attention to the plight of the strawberry workers, and was the largest organizing action in the UFWs history.

This year, underscoring the groundswell of public support the strawberry workers have gained since Watsonville, the Farm Workers and their allies marked the beginning of strawberry season in late March with rallies in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and San Antonio, Texas.

In New York City, supporters rallied on Broadway to hear UFW Secretary-Treasurer Dolores Huerta, who urged the public to aid in the strawberry struggle by asking Driscoll to let their workers organize. Chicago ralliers shouted "Driscoll, be fair," as they marched across the street from Anton Marano Product Co., the city's largest buyer of Driscoll berries. And in San Antonio, strawberry supporters marched with Rodriguez, who also participated in the San Francisco rally the following day with union members and supporters.

"It's inspirational to see the support we've gotten from the various communities of labor, women's, religious and environmental communities, and the entire San Francisco community," UFW organizer Elena Briones said at the rally. "We'll take this energy back to Watsonville with us."

Five-Star Success

atharine Hepburn, hot chocolate and cell phones were among the ingredients in a successful strike by Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 100 at the Box Tree, one of New York's toniest eateries. But the key to victory for the waiters, kitchen workers and room attendants who ratified a new contract in February was their own fivestar special: persistence. Local 100 members picketed the Box Tree-known for its \$86 fixed-price dinner (wine not included)—every night of the four-year strike.

The workers' plight drew the support of many residents in the posh neighborhood, including Hepburn and others who provided hot chocolate and treats on winter nights. Strikers used cell phones to help diners make reservations at

other luxury restaurants.

Local 100 also applied pressure off the picket line, urging companies to cancel reservations for private party rooms, and providing information to the city's Buildings Department and the state's Liquor Authority that led to investigations of the restaurant.

While most of the original 34 strikers found new jobs, three returned to work after the new pact was signed; all of the restaurant's current staff have joined the local. One worker who won't be returning to the restaurant, picket captain Miguel de la Rosa, is now a Local 100 organizer.



victory. OPHER SMITH/IMPACT VISUALS

workers of New York's Box Tree restaurant

A Rio DILEMMA

Wearing brown paper bags over their heads and "Rio Hostage" Tshirts, three Las Vegas hotel workers joined with ex-union buster

Martin Levitt at a press conference in February to describe how their efforts to organize are being held hostage to union-busting techniques such as captive audience meetings.

Former Rio employee Peggy Imbo, removing the bag from her head, said that after she had hosted a union meeting at her home, "I was written up by management and fired." The long-time PBX operator now proudly says her job is "union organizer."

Teamsters Local 995 has filed National Labor Relations Board charges against the hotel, alleging Imbo was fired for her union activities. The local is organizing 150 employees who work as gardeners, laborers, window-washers and

front desk clerks. The Rio Hotel and Casino is paying tens of thousands of dollars to its hired gun, Mark Garrity of Balance Inc., whose job, according to the IBT, is to thwart a Teamsters' organizing drive.

Since 1985, Garrity has obstructed several organizing campaigns at Las Vegas casinos. In 1995, he earned \$815,000 for beating organizing drives at The Excalibur and Luxor casinos and at casino games' manufacturer Sigma Games, Inc., according to public records. Garrity's apparent failure to file required federal disclosure forms for every year since 1990, except for 1995, has put him under investigation by the Department of Labor, the union says.

The Teamsters' organizing effort is one of several begun by Local 995 since members approved a special \$3-a-month organizing assessment last June. Organizer Rob Rovere, a rank-and-file warehouse worker until January, says Garrity is telling employees that unions are in "the protection racket." Rovere adds, "I was called a "sleaze-bag organizer. I took it as a compliment."



AARON MAYES/THE LAS VEGAS SUN

Brown-bogging it: Workers organizing of The Rio Hotel and Cosino feor management retoliotion.

Community Outreach in Cleveland

our child's success is our success." That's the message a coalition of Cleveland labor unions is sending to parents in a brochure explaining a series of new state proficiency tests students must pass to graduate from high school.

The unionized bus drivers, custodians, teachers and security officers behind the effort include members of the Firemen and Oilers, AFT, Teamsters and SEIU. With the Cleveland AFL-CIO, they make up the Cleveland Public School Employees Council.

The brochure, which alerts parents to the importance of the tests and details how they can help their children

prepare, includes comments from a bus driver, a custodian, a teacher and a security officer. It is part of an expanded Union Cities community outreach effort by the unions of the central labor council.

"It all started because we understand that education is under attack and labor unions are under attack," says John Ryan, executive secretary of the Cleveland AFL-CIO. "To change that perspective, we wanted to help in a positive, ongoing way."

The Cleveland coalition's next project is already in the works: distributing information about a little-know state health care program that offers free services to low-income residents.



JA J Quer in no y

Shoptalk

ORGANIZING

nion technology directors are seeking ways to make organizers more effective and efficient, and one that is catching on is software specially designed for organizing. Several affiliates already have organizing templates adaptable to each campaign to aid in quantifying information about potential members and their employers. They're using the templates, most of which have been developed in-house, to streamline daily operations—membership list maintenance, dues collection and community outreach.

AFT used an organizing template in organizing drives in Dallas, where the Teachers have organized 10,000 workers, and in Maryland, where 6,000 were added to the membership, says Charles Stunson, AFT's director of information technology.

AFT General Manager Ron Krouse says the template, which was first used in 1995 and is now in its third version, speeds up the process leading to an election, "concentrating resources on where you can get the biggest bang for your buck." Database information enables organizers to assess potential members' support for the union.

SEIU staffers are examining a range of organizing tools for multisite campaigns. Currently, the union's organizing template is at work in organizing drives in Miami, Las Vegas and Puerto Rico, says Jim O'Brien, director of information technology.



AFSCME is in the process of developing an organizing template that can be modified on the fly, says Steve Cable, director of information systems. Currently, the organizers have a mobile setup of computers and

other equipment. The union is moving to a client-server network and assessing software to develop a standardized package for local unions.

By using computer software to organize public employees in Maryland, AFT organizer Charlie Dodson says the technology saves him two-to-three months on an organizing campaign. "I've got the names of 100,000 state workers on my database in Maryland, even though we represent just 5,000," Dodson says. "Now when people get transferred into or out of our unit, I can punch in their name and have all the demographics right away."

0824

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Q. I make good money on my job. Tell me why I should care whether the minimum wage is raised again this year. A. Raising the minimum wage helps all working families. The most recent increase to \$5.15 an hour on Sept. 1, 1997 provided raises to about 10 million minimum

wage workers earning less than that amount, and to several million more whose somewhat higher pay rates rose when the increase took effect. Altogether, minimum wage hikes may directly benefit as many as one in seven workers. So chances are, even if your pay isn't affected by a minimum wage hike, the wages of a friend or family member or co-worker are affected.

Raising the minimum wage is also important because when the minimum wage is boosted, the increase bumps up all wages above the floor. The minimum wage was frozen throughout the 1980s, causing its value to fall significantly. Partly because of this decline, incomes for most working families fell, and income inequality—the gap between the top 20 percent of wage earners and all other workers—grew substantially. Raising the minimum wage again to help hold its value will aid in reversing these trends: A higher minimum

wage helps to sta-

bilize and boost

incomes for most

working families

and reduces the

income disparities

between the richest

and the rest of us.

Q. What obligations does an employer have when it takes over a company whose employees are represented by a union?

A. If the new employer hires a majority of its employees from the predecessor and continues the existing business without substantially changing operations, the new employer is a successor and will be obligated to recognize and bargain with the union. The successor, however, is not bound to its predecessor's bargaining agreement, unless it adopts or assumes the contract.

A successor employer may also be obligated to remedy its predecessor's unfair labor practices. Such a duty will be imposed if the successor takes over the business with knowledge of pending unfair labor practice charges or outstanding NLRB orders. In the case of unlawfully discharged employees, both the predecessor and the successor will be liable for back pay, and the successor will be required to offer the employees immediate reinstatement to their former or substantially equivalent positions.

Because the composition of the new workforce is critical to determining successorship, unions must scrutinize the hiring of predecessor employees to be sure that the new employer does not discriminate in order to evade its obligations as a

successor.

What's your question?
Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@work,
AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W.
Washingtan, D.C. 20006
Phone: 202-637-5010
Fax: 202-508-6908
E-mail: atwork@aflcio.org

III LUIU

Showcasing Union Skills

This year, Mardi Gras isn't the only reason to travel to New Orleans. The 1998 AFL-CIO Union-Industries Show, slated for April 17–20 at the

UNION INDUSTRIES SHOW APRIL 17-20, 1998

SHOW APRIL 17-20, 1998

PROPERTY OF THE ADMISSION FAMILY FUN. Samples Gifts Prizes Demonstrations

More than 300 Exhibits

recently unionized New Orleans Convention Center, will showcase more than 300 union-made goods and interactive displays stretching across an area the size of five football fields.

The show is returning to the city for the third time in its 60-year history, and will include glass blowing demonstrations by Flint Glass workers, opportunities to talk with UAW members about concept cars on display from major auto manufacturers and a space station staffed by members of the United AutoWorkers, Steelworkers, Machinists, Electronic Workers and Operating Engineers. Prize giveaways—from decorated cakes to bikes—also will be featured at the show, where admission is free.

The crowd will include 20,000 students bused in from nearby schools systems as

part of a student outreach program by the AFT and the AFL-CIO Union Label and Service Trades Department. For more information, call 202-638-2131.

Making Our Voices Heard: June 24

On June 24, unionists will increase efforts to focus community attention on the faces, voices and stories of workers who are struggling to improve their lives—and on the war that is routinely forced on them by employers. In communities across the nation, activities are planned to begin telling this little-known story to the news media, community groups, elected leaders and businesses. These activities also will help build the community support that is vital to organizing campaigns. The effort is part of a bigger initiative to make respect for workers' futures and their choices an accepted and expected standard for employers.

For more information, call Enid Eckstein in the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department at 617-557-5488, or Liann Ainsworth in the Organizing Department, 202-639-6225.

Take a Stand for Avondale

Avondale production workers and their supporters recently launched a nationwide petition drive to win support for their struggle to organize—a battle the 4,000 Louisiana production workers began nearly five years ago, when they voted overwhelmingly for union representation. Most recently, management appealed the NLRB's final bargaining order last October, creating litigation that could delay a decision for two more years.

AVONDE Workers
Simple Justice

Meanwhile, despite government charges that Avondale has harassed employees and sought retribution when workers tried to organize, Avondale has corralled more than \$10 billion in government contracts.

Thirty workers have been killed building ships at Avondale, four since the union election; on average, the company experiences 1,000 reportable injuries every year.

"Working in a massive shipyard where they endure unspeakable working conditions, extreme safety hazards and inadequate wages, these workers have exhibited incredible patience and heroic courage," says AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department President John Meese.

For copies of the "I'll be there for Avondale's workers" petition, contact the Metal Trades Department, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006; 202-637-7255; fax: 202-347-0181.

Publications

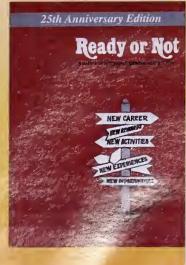
The Privatization of Public Service: Lessons From Case Studies provides concise examples of how privatization of public services costs taxpayers more—not less. Author Elliott Sclar, a Columbia University urban planning professor, also includes a case study in which the Indianapolis city government garnered savings of up to 29 percent when it chose to reorganize its fleet maintenance department rather than to privatize it. The 28-page pamphlet, \$12 plus shipping and handling, is available from the Economic Policy Institute, 800-EPI-4844. A 20 percent discount is available for three or more copies.

No More Candy Store: States and Cities Making Job Subsidies Accountable details the millions of dollars in tax breaks and subsidies corporations receive to create jobs—only to turn around and pay poverty wages or move jobs from city to city. The book also provides specific legislative remedies, including "clawbacks" (money back guarantees), and labor campaign case studies. Individual copies are \$20; orders of five or more, \$15 each (postage and handling included). Send checks to "GPP" (Grassroots Policy Project), 2040 S St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Rocking the Boat: Union Women's Voices, 1915-1975, by Brigid O'Farrell and Joyce L. Kornblum, is a compilation of inspiring stories about union women, including Esther Peterson (Clothing Workers), Lillian

Herstein (American Federation of Teachers) and Jessie De La Cruz (United Farm Workers). The 317-page book is available in paperback (\$17.95) and hardback (\$50) from Rutgers University Press, 100 Joyce Kilmer Ave., Piscataway, N.J. 08854; 800-445-9323.

It's never too early to start planning for retirement, and *Ready or Not* makes the effort easier by directly and actively involving readers in issues from financial planning to grandparenting. The step-by-step approach leads to personal "status reports" that identify problems and opportunities. *Ready or Not*, by Elizabeth M. McFadden, is available for \$8.95, plus \$1.25 shipping and handling, from the Manpower Education Institute, 715 Ladd Rd., Bronx, N.Y. 10471, 718-548-4200



make our voice heard

For the past several years, workers and their unions have fought successfully to save job safety and health protections from an all-out assault by employers and their Republican allies.

Now, these same groups are trying to stop working families from speaking out on politics and legislation.

They want to prevent members from speaking out through their unions for strong job safety laws, and opposing measures that endanger workers' lives.

For decades, union members have led the fight for stronger job safety protections that have improved the lives of all workers organized and unorganized. We must continue that fight.

A time to remember those who have suffered and died on the job... And to renew the fight for safe workplaces.

> On April 28, Workers Memorial Day, we call for:

- An end to employer and Republican attacks on workers' safety and health.
- Fair and timely compensation for injured workers.
- Stronger whistle-blower protections for workers who report job hazards and injuries.
- An OSHA ergonomics standard to prevent repetitive strain injuries.
- Coverage for all workers under the job safety law.
- The right of workers to organize and join unions without employer interference or intimidation.

April 28, 1998

Call 202-637-5367 to find out more about Workers Memorial Day.

Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

MAY 1998

NO TEMPORARY SOLUTION

From Jazz Artists to Home ware Workers

Ideas and Views From You

A GOOD ECONOMY? NOT FOR EVERYONE

@"People are lucky where a union is. At least they have a retirement. I don't where I work. The only thing I have is Social Security. I'll have to work a part-time job if I decide to get out when I am 62, plus I have to buy my own insurance. So the people that have a union should be thankful to God....

"I can't see how the economy is picking up. But in Washington, they say it's great. I feel that our government...will not do anything for the working person anymore."—John Raneiri, Pottstown, Pa. (lost a union job at the local Firestone Tire and Rubber plant in 1980)

@"I share your sentiments exactly about the economy. It looks good on paper that there are lots of jobs and very low unemployment. However, because wages are on the downsizing side of corporate profiteering, more and more people are working at two and three jobs to make ends meet.

"But I seriously question you blaming Republicans....As far as I'm concerned, both parties are at fault for widening the gap between rich and poor."-Dion Hamilton, Mauston, Wis.

Say What?

Tell us how your union is organizing nonstandard workers. Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about

this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

America@work

815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org

wnen you see unions@work and our members@work and collective power in our

communities@work, that's when you see

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY YOUR RESPONSES TO THE CORPORATE, LEGISLATIVE AND **OTHER ATTACKS ON WORKING FAMILIES:**

(a) "We sent delegations from every central labor council in the state to meet with our Florida legislators in Tallahassee to lobby for Florida's working families. The issues were payroll protection acts, health care, child care, bargaining for the public sector, electrical deregulation, telecommunications, universal service and rate restructuring, etc., etc."—Steven Bunn, Florida AFL-CIO

(a) "In October, the West Virginia Alliance of Utility Unions was endorsed by the West Virginia AFL-CIO. Our local, SEIU 999, and CWA Local 20001 were instrumental in getting the alliance born

"Recently we addressed members of the West Virginia AFL-CIO Legislation Conference on the state-introduced bills on electric deregulation. It appears that through the hard work of the West Virginia AFL-CIO, if a bill even manages to get signed into law within West Virginia, it will be one that is in total contrast of the one they tried to ram down the throats of West Virginians.

"The battle can sometimes be won at the negotiating table—but the war must be fought and won through political action in our state and national capitals."—Charlie Rittenhouse, president, Allegheny Mountain Gas Workers Union, SEIU Local 999

MEET THE PREZ

@ "On March 5, 1998, national AFL-CIO President John Sweeney conducted a town hallstyle forum at IAM Local Lodge 1746 in East Hartford, Conn....Our Machinist members... along with members from other unions, totaled approximately 180. Many Machinist members [said] it was great to ... express their concerns about the AFL-CIO and the labor movement in

"No one could remember the last time that a national AFL-CIO president had taken the time to meet with workers one-on-one and listen to their concerns....Their only negative comment was that they would have liked more time to meet with him."—James Parent, directing business representative, IAM Aeronautical Industrial District Lodge 91, East Hartford, Conn.



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AFL-CIO Public Affairs Department 815 16th St., N.W.

Woshington, D.C. 20006 Telephone: 202-637-5010 Fox: 202-508-6908

E-mail: atwork@aficio.org net: http://www.oflcia.nrg



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Bicientub

WHERE'S MY 26 CENTS?

n April 3, women's paychecks finally caught up to men's—from the previous year. Women today earn 26 cents less for every dollar than their male counterparts—a difference that translates

to \$523,000 over the career of the average 25-yearold working woman and that sparked hundreds of demonstrations, actions and conferences across the nation to mark Equal Pay Day.

Through more than 600 events, working families and set up phone banks in Grand Forks, N.D., to lobby lawmakers, and leafleted downtown Cleveland. Commuters at the Palentine, Ill., train station were serenaded with "Close the Wage Gap" while Great American Bagel sold special smaller bagels for 74 cents. Denver's Wynkoop Brewing Company offered 26-cents-on-the-dollar discounts to working women who mentioned Equal Pay Day.

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson pointed out that equal pay is a family issue—it can make the difference in whether a family can afford child care, decent health care or a decent retirement.

In Connecticut the efforts of union and community activists have resulted in state legislation that, if passed, would be the nation's first private-sector pay

equity law.

Under the proposed measure, workers in job categories that pay less

Equal Pay Day: On April 3, warking wamen and their allies held mare than 600 demanstrations, rallies and ather events to shaw their support far equal pay.

AFL-CIO Executive

Chavez-Thompson.

Vice President Linda

their unions boosted public awareness about the pay gap, and urged Congress to expand current pay equity laws to cover all women and enact legislation that punishes employers that violate equal pay laws.

Hundreds of working women and their allies rallied in Baltimore, Chicago; Santa Fe; Charlotte, N.C.; and Little Rock. They than equivalent jobs could file discrimination complaints. Employers would be required to provide information about job titles and descriptions, qualifications and wage scales. Workers seeking such information could not be penalized.

Speaking before the General Assembly's Judiciary Committee in March, AFL-CIO Working Women's Department Director Karen Nussbaum noted that working women contribute half or more of their families' income. "It's high time—past time, in fact—for women's pay to catch up with men's," she said.

Connecticut is one of seven states with pay equity statutes already governing state employees.

Bringing it home: San Antonia kindergarten

Bringing it home: San Antonia kindergarte teacher and AFT member Mary Huerta talks abaut being a union member in an AFL-CIO Spanish and English televisian ad.

SPOTLIGHT

Organizing: The Maine Issue

hen a town holds a potluck benefit supper, the fundraising efforts usually help pay a resident's medical expenses, or enable the high school band to travel out of state. But the money raised by the Central Maine Labor Council's March 28 benefit supper was for workers who were fired for trying to organize at Crowe Rope Co. in Waterville, Maine, and for workers laid off from local paper mills (Kimberly Clark and Tree Free) and Cascade Woolen Mills.

The Central Maine Labor Council, headquartered in Oakland and serving towns in Kennebec and Somerset counties, is part of the AFL-CIO's growing Union Cities program, and is actively engaged in the fight for the right to organize. Key to the Union Cities strategy is involving community groups in organizing and union outreach—and in Maine, the CLC more than met its goal.

Nearly 400 people crowded into the Waterville Elks Club for the \$5-a-head fundraiser to help 28 workers fired after UNITE narrowly lost an election at Crowe last year. The funds also went to local workers who lost their jobs when profitable mills shut down—including Kimberly Clark, which CLC President Nina Quirion says "never lost a penny," but was closed to help pay off that firm's previous owner, Scott Paper Co.

In March, more than 100 people showed up at the Winslow, Maine, fire station for a public forum on the right to organize that was sponsored by the CLC, the Maine Council of Churches, the Catholic Diocese, the Dirigio Alliance and the Maine People's Alliance. Several state legislators heard testimony from the fired Crowe workers and from laid-off mill workers. They urged the lawmakers to support organizing rights and corporate accountability legislation to ensure that future actions by firms such as Kimberly Clark and Cascade don't devastate communities and workers.



In Their Own Words

an Antonio kindergarten teacher and AFT member Mary Huerta thinks the public should know what it means to belong to a union—and she'll be telling her story as a union member in the first bilingual television commercials among five spots featuring workers. The spots have aired in San Antonio, Seattle, Milwaukee, St. Louis and Baltimore.

In the 30- and 60-second spots, Huerta is shown with her students, describing their desires to be teachers, police officers or fire fighters when they grow up. Huerta's mission: "I want these kids to have goals and accomplish things in their own lives."

At a press conference at Woodlawn Elementary School where Huerta teaches, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson announced the campaign's kick-off in March, when the ads began airing in San Antonio. The workers in the ads—a nurse, construction worker, food service worker, Harley-Davidson worker and Huerta—explain in their own words how union membership enables them to carry out quality work, have a voice on the job and improve their wages and benefits. @

Blue Devils Heat up Sweatshop Fight

he Duke University Blue Devils may not have won the NCAA basketball championship this year, but they scored a major victory for workers and human rights when they adopted a new code of conduct to ensure that products bearing the team's name are not made in sweatshops.

Announced in
March, Duke's code
bars contractors from
using child or forced
labor and requires them to
maintain safe workplaces, pay
at least the minimum wage and
recognize the right to form unions.

"This code of conduct is going to mean real changes, real improvements in the lives of garment workers," says Ginny Coughlin, who heads UNITE's Stop Sweatshops Campaign. Brown University just announced plans to adopt similar rules for its licensees.

The enforcement mechanism requires contractors to identify all factories making products with Duke's name and to allow unimpeded visits by independent monitors. The code calls for the monitors to talk to workers and to consult with nongovernment organizations familiar with factory conditions.

More than 700 contractors make about \$20 million worth of goods bearing Duke's name each year. The products are made at hundreds of plants in the United States and in more than 10 other countries.

A GOLDEN LEASH FOR CAPTIVE LAWMAKE

e've all heard about the golden parachutes—multi-million dollar severance packages corporate executives strap on when they bail out of companies. Now, there is the Golden Leash, a high-priced link between campaign donations by corporations and the lawmakers who do their bidding.

Public Campaign, a non-profit, nonpartisan group promoting campaign finance reform, has awarded its first Golden Leash Award to Rep. Bill McCollum (R-Fla.), who has cashed in on nearly \$375,000 in contributions from the banking and credit card industries over the past six years. McCollum is the original sponsor of a bill that Public Campaign

describes as a "credit-card company wish list."

"Rep. McCollum's actions on behalf of the billion-dollar credit industry...are proof that special interests have greater influence on our democratic process than the public interest," says Ellen Miller, the group's executive director. "Politicians like Rep. McCollum should be held accountable for the money they take."

The award is patterned after former Sen. William Proxmire's legendary Golden Fleece Award, which the Wisconsin congressman granted for extraordinary instances of government waste. The goal of the Golden Leash, Public Campaign says, is to highlight who's really in charge when lawmakers are led around by special interests at the expense of average taxpayers.

Workers Memorial Day GOES GLOBAL

hen tens of thousonds of U.S. workers rollied ond morched for safe jobs on Workers

Memoriol Doy April 28, their efforts were supported by workers across the globe.

In London, construction workers morched on the Heolth and Safety Executive's heodquarters, where they placed a wreath in memory of workers killed by osbestos. They demonded possage of stronger heolth and safety lows and on end to osbestos imports in the United Kingdom. Workers Memorial Day ceremonies also were held in Birminghom, U.K., and in several Scottish cities, Copenhagen, Denmork and throughout Canada. The international Confederation for Free Trade Unions estimates that 500 workers are killed on the job every day, and that as many as 165 million contract occupational diseases each year.

In the United Stotes, workers demonded on end to employer and Republicon attacks on job sofety lows and workers' compensation laws, and called for exconger enforcement of current sofety and health measures and for possage of whistle-leaver protection legislation cowers who report job hozords and injuries.

Union members pointed out that mony of the same U.S. politicions and empty groups behind the job sofety ottocks are allied in the attempt to silence working to a in the political and legislative areas.



nionists braved wind chills of 47 degrees below zero in March in South Sioux City, Neb., and set up an informational picket line outside MCI's special shareholder meeting to protest the company's proposed merger with WorldCom, a global telecommunications company. Meanwhile, the Rev. Jesse Jackson joined the ranks during a similar protest outside WorldCom's meeting in Jackson, Miss.

The Communications Workers say such a mega-merger would be anticompetitive and violate federal antitrust standards, while helping high-value business customers at the expense of residential con-

sumers. Some 75,000 jobs could be lost over the next four years if MCI reduces the type of investment that creates jobs.

"After the merger, WorldCom will control more than 60 percent of the Internet, which is the key to the communications infrastructure," CWA President Morton Bahr notes. "Virtually the entire Internet will be controlled by just two providers, with Sprint running a distant second behind WorldCom. This is not healthy competition."

Government agencies here and abroad are probing the merger scheme for its potential impact on their own economies and on world commerce.

UAW Approves Caterpillar Pact

he UAW ended its long fight with Caterpillar with a new six-year contract that raises wages up to 4 percent, provides job security and improves retirement benefits. The contract was ratified by a 54 percent

majority, and includes an agreement that CAT will dismiss 400 federal labor charges against the company.

"This new agreement is the culmination of outstanding solidarity by UAW-Caterpillar workers

throughout seven years of struggle," says UAW President
Stephen Yokich.
The new pact, which covers
13,000 workers, reinstates 160 workers who were fired illegally during the strike.



CAT pact: The UAW ended its long fight with Caterpillar with a

new six-year contract that raises wages up to 4 percent, pro-

vides job security and improves retirement benefits.

ORGANIZING

ALLIES IN ORGANIZING

Workers in two Spring organizing drives won with the help of community allies. Rep. William Delahunt (D-Mass.) pitched in with SEIU Local 285's organizing drive at the American Red Cross in Boston. Without union representation, he wrote in letters to the 64 workers earlier this month, "then would be no hope for working rum and women to share in a little siece of the American drean... The workers, who run blood drags throughout the state, voted for TU Local 28 representation. In Cleveland,

workers at Dreison's Supertrap and DCM voted for UNITE representation. Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), several city council members and volunteers from Paperworkers Local 7209 at Harley-Davidson Motor Company's Milwaukee, Wis., plant helped on the drive. The 150 workers make mufflers for Harley-Davidson and parts for the auto, military and construction industries. In other organizing wins:

AFSCME Workers who care for the developmentally disabled at ARC of Rock County, Ill., voted 98-13 for AFSCME representa-

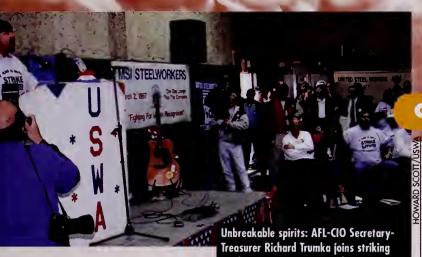
tion. The workers expressed concern about work rules that limit the quality of patient care and about low wages.

IBT Workers at Southern Sanitation in Pompano Beach, Fla., voted 165-35 for Teamsters representation. The workers ignored a harsh anti-union campaign and cast their ballots for IBT Local 390. The IBT also announced that 1997 was the union's best organizing year of the decade, bringing in more than 30,000 new members through elections and card checks.

LIUNA Certified nursing assistants at the Greenwich Woods

Health Care Center in Greenwich, Conn., voted for Laborers representation. The 129-worker unit cited patient care, and mistreatment by management as top concerns.

SEIU At the Hamilton Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Norwich, Conn., 140 workers turned back a vicious anti-union campaign—including one administrator telling pro-union workers "we can have monkeys do your work"—and voted for the respect and dignity that come with a union contract and SEIU District 1199NE membership.



How Long Before Union Recognition? workers at Magnetic Specialty Inc. in

he 100 workers at Magnetic Specialty Inc. (MSI) in Marietta, Ohio, who have been on strike for a year to get union recognition, got a big boost in March when more than 4,000 labor union members from throughout the Midwest and Maryland rallied to send a message to MSI: "We will be here one day longer than you."

After workers voted overwhelmingly to join the Steelworkers nearly three years ago, the company refused to recognize the union—despite three NLRB orders to do so. The NLRB has charged MSI, which has fired union supporters and replaced striking workers, with unfair labor practices. Last October, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit upheld the election and ordered the company to bargain. So far, there have been only three negotiating sessions and little progress.

"The way it is in that plant, if management doesn't like your looks they'll fire you, or make you want to quit," says Bessie Hager, an 11year MSI worker. "Some workers would be in there crying from the way they were treated by bosses." The marchers not only showed their solidarity with their feet, they also opened their wallets and contributed more than \$56,000 to help the strikers.

or some workers, one, two, or even three jobs isn't enough to move out of poverty. But the struggle for a living wage is gaining momentum across the country, with workers and community activists in Detroit the latest to take their fight to the legislative level.

The Metropolitan Detroit Central Labor Council is campaigning for living wage ordinances that will require businesses receiving public subsidies-in the form of tax breaks and other corporate welfare—to pay their workers

enough to put groceries on the table and a roof over their heads.

"This proposal is part of a large, multifaceted national approach to invigorating the labor movement," says CLC President Edgar Scribner. "If you're making five, six, seven dollars an hour, you have to work two or three jobs just to have some semblance of quality of life, and that's not right."

Despite a recent increase in the federal minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour, a worker in Detroit would need at least \$8.35 an hour to keep a family of four out of poverty, according to the Michigan County Social Services Association.

Beyond Detroit, Michigan unionists may also seek ordinances in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties. Their ultimate goal: transforming Michigan into a living-wage state.

don't have to tell you the stories I hear about workers fired, humiliated. harassed and worse because they're trying to organize unions to improve their lives. You know what they endure as they try to realize their hopes for better futures.

But much of America doesn't know. Because the Constitution gives citizens the right to speak and congregate freely, because labor laws provide-on paper, at least-the right to form and join unions, many of our neighbors wrongly believe their choices about whether to join

together on the job and bargain collectively are secure.

As our organizing efforts increase, we can expect the fierce resistance of employers to escalate, too. The war they routinely force on working people will get uglier and more widespread. Since 1986, according to Cornell's Kate Bronfenbrenner, the number of employers running aggressive anti-union campaigns has more than doubled—from 20 percent to 42 percent of employers in all campaigns.

It's up to us to make sure this isn't a hidden war. It's up to us to make sure workers' voices are heard.

As we organize and fight for first contracts, we need to focus new community attention on the faces, voices and stories of the working people who are struggling to build better lives. We must create opportunities and public forums for workers to tell their neighbors why they have chosen to organize in a union. We need to enable workers to tell about the cost of exercising their right to unionize.

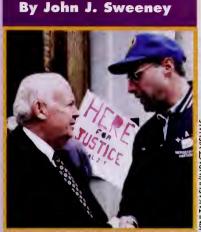
At the same time, we have to create new standards for corporate behavior based on respect for workers' choices, rights and futures, and to enlist our communities in holding employers accountable. The communities where we live and work should be called upon to make it clear to businesses that ignoring workers' rights and standing between working families and a chance for greater well-being is unacceptable and won't be tolerated.

We also must give our members opportunities to spread the word neighbor to neighbor, friend to friend—about how unions make life better for working families so others can understand why working people are willing to risk so much to become part of a union.

And finally, as elected officials and candidates pursue our votes, it's the perfect time for members to educate them bout the need to restore respect for the choices and hopes of working people.

On June 24, local unions and labor councils in dozens of cities will begin this long-term initiative by giving working Americans the chance to tell their stories, share their ambitions and appeal to community groups and elected officials for support. They will expose employers that are trampling their rights. But also will recognigood corporate citizens and hold up examples worth follows:

Creating a public ethos that recognizes the inherent digr working people and honors their choices will require or ... efforts for a very long time. There's no mae like now to said.



Telling

STORY

Organizing part-time,

on-call or temporary

workers takes a

full-time commitment

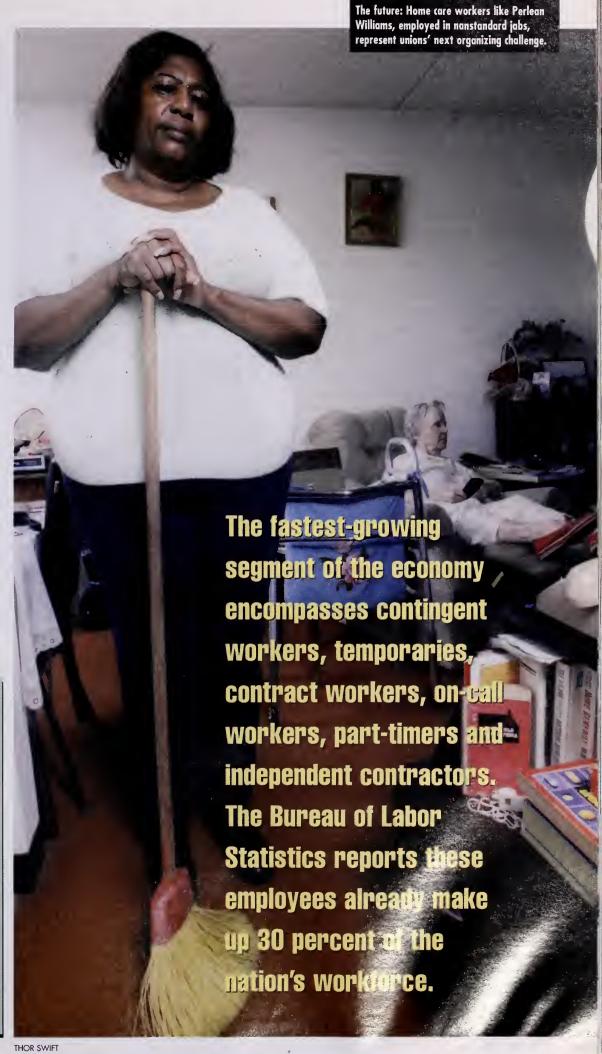
BY JAMES B. PARKS

ong before the sun rises over the Sacramento mountains, home care worker Perlean Williams is on the road visiting what she calls her "family"—four women, three of them in wheelchairs, who depend on her to cook, clean, wash, shop, run errands and take them to the doctor. Her devotion to her clients is unshakable. "I'd do anything for those women," she says.

Yet, in the eight years she's been a care giver, Williams has had to work harder and for far lower wages than she did in her 30 years as a factory worker at the local Del Monte plant. She usually works about 45 hours a week—earning the minimum wage with no benefits. When two of her clients were sick in December, she worked 320 hours, about 80 hours a week.

Williams is a member of the fastest growing segment of the economy—the "nonstandard" job sector that encompasses contingent workers, temporaries, contract workers, on-call workers, part-timers and independent contractors. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 30 percent of the nation's workers are employed in some





form of nonstandard work—the largest group in part-time jobs. They are home care workers, musicians, retail clerks, technology specialists, builders and others. Consider that in 1986, the number of temporary workers was 800,000. But the number soared to 2.5 million in 1997, or to about 2 percent of the workforce, according to the National Association of Temporary and Staffing Services. In the construction industry, one in every four workers is classified as an independent contractor. Most actually are regular employees who employers have deliberately misclassified in order to avoid paying Social Security, income taxes and benefits.

Workers like Williams represent both the future of the union movement and one of its biggest challenges. "Unless the labor movement reins in the power of the temp agencies, we're all going to be temporary," says Cindy Chavez, political director of the South Bay Central Labor Council. Contingent work will "spread to every industry where we represent workers," she adds. "Organizing temporary workers is not optional." Unions need to organize in large numbers to boost the voices of workers such as Williams who, as a result of SEIU's campaign to organize home care workers in California, is now a member of SEIU Local 22.

Many of these new workers are in professions such as home care that have mush-roomed in the past few years. Others, such as jazz musicians, have been around—unorga-

nized—for years. The combination of low wages and rapid growth in service-sector jobs, where most of these workers are employed, has made workers hungry for organizing, Chavez says.

Because the union movement has not focused on organizing these workers, new strategies are needed: recruiting member-organizers, involving workers in the legislative process when it's neccssary to change the rules or remove unfair roadblocks and building grassroots and community support. Another obstacle: These workers often are difficult to contact because they work irregular ship or in eidely scattered la tion It's often necessary as step back and

define the bargaining unit—and sometimes even the employer, as in the SEIU California home care campaign.

New twists on traditional tactics

In the handful of cases where unions have begun organizing nonstandard workers, unions have found success when they recast the components of a traditional organizing campaign to reflect the new work-place realities. Basically, organizing nonstandard workers

succeeds when unions use the same strategies they implement as they change to organize.

The first step is to focus on outreach: The union can bolster its organizing efforts with the grassroots political strength, community support or work-based ties the union has built up over the years.

"Unions must...go to more of a grassroots model, one that's more inclusive, more representative of their members, and build a campaign from the bottom up," says labor researcher Kate Bronfenbrenner. Bronfen-

brenner, with Tom Juravidch, is the author of "It Takes More Than House Calls: Organizing to Win With a Comprehensive Union-Building Strategy," in the recently-published Organizing to Win.



MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY, NEW HYDE PARK, NEW YORK

Musicians Local 802 in New York City, which represents musicians who play part time in symphonies, jazz bands and other music groups, avoids the traditional NLRB election route and instead asks for card-check recognition. Once the AFM secures a majority of workers' signatures, the union leverages that support to persuade management to recognize the union. For instance, if the union suggests a possible walkout on the eve of a performance, most managers agree to work with the workers rather than face the public's reaction to canceled performances, says organizer Tim Dubnau.

The next step is to find and train workers to become member-organizers—and to follow through with the support they need. The Communication Workers' organizing victory among 10,000 USAirways passenger service agents last September resulted in part from member-organizers such as Velvet Hawthorne. Hawthorne, based in Winston-Salem, N.C., was one of 140 USAirways activists recruited by the union, which set up national "links" that allowed

Nonstandard Workers: 2.5 Million and Growing

Thirty percent of the nation's workers are employed in some form of nonstandard work—the largest group in part-time jobs.

The number of temporary workers tripled from 800,000 in 1986 to 2.5 million in 1997.

More than 60 percent of independent contractors work in the low-wage service industries.

Women make up 67 percent of the part-time work force and 53 percent of temporary workers.

Only 2 percent of temporary workers are covered by union contracts.

Sources: Burean of Labor Statistics, National Association of Temporary and Staffing Services.



AFL-CIO FILE PHOTO

worker-leaders to communicate with other agents working at 120 different locations around the country.

One link involved a series of daily national conference calls at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m—in effect, a coast-to-coast union meeting—for workers to discuss the problems they faced on the job. CWA also set up a website and an e-mail tree (similar to a phone tree) to communicate with the employees, 40 percent of whom work part time. One-on-one meetings were another effective strategy for Hawthorne and other member-organizers, who traveled to airports to talk with agents.

The role of legislative action

As in traditional campaigns, political action can be a necessary component in organizing contingent workers. But just as new organizing strategies focus on member involvement, so, too, is effective political action based in grassroots mobilization. "It's easy for workers to see how a law can help them. It's a great organizing tool," says Tim Costello, who directs the Northeast Resource Center's campaign for contingent workers in Boston. The Resource Center has launched a statewide effort to pass legislation requiring employers to pay wages for part-time work based on full-time workers' hourly rates, and ensuring part-time employees receive health, pension and other benefits. Fighting for legislation is an "attractive way to get workers involved in helping their own cause," Costello adds.

The Resource Center, a coalition of local unions, the Massachusetts State AFL-CIO, and community, religious and human rights groups, also hopes to exert pressure on employers by drafting a code of conduct for the temporary work industry. The code could be a good preliminary organizing strategy, Costello says, because it will draw attention to a workforce that is frequently taken advantage of, and will make workers aware that they have support.

On the national level, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney announced that the Federation will work with Congress and state legislatures for passage of federal legislation—to prevent employers from subjecting workers to the kind of abuse experienced by a contingent cleaning and dietary staff at Coney Island Hospital. In March 1997, the hospital hired 54 welfare recipients (primarily female) to enable it to gain accreditation by the Joint Commission on Hospital Accreditation. Once it received a clean bill of health, the hospital dumped the workers without notice right before Thanksgiving—even though they had been promised full-time jobs.

Political action laid the foundation for SEIU's ongoing home care victories in California. Ten years ago, most of the state's 180,000 home care workers were considered independent

contractors employed by the patient, funded by the state and working at the direction of individual counties. Before it could begin signing up the workers, SEIU organizers waged a multi-year political and legislative campaign to redefine the employer. At every stage of the campaign, the union mobilized home care workers to push for reform. Backed by grassroots political action, SEIU lobbied the state legislature to allow counties to create "public authorities" to serve as the employer and bargaining agent for home care workers. So far, five county home care authorities have been created as a result of SEIU's efforts; the union has won elections covering 25,000 workers in

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Organizing part-time, on-call or temporary workers requires innovation and commitment. Unions that have successfully organized temporary, on-call, contingent or part-time workers:

- Commit enough financial and personnel resources to carry out a long campaign.
- Develop a core of grassroots workerleaders to communicate with other workers.
- Establish communication links such as conference calls and e-mail to reach workers.
- Enlist local union support to develop an organizing network.
- Consistently foster ties to and actively involve the community in campaigns.
- Involve workers in the political process when it's necessary to change the rules or remove unfair roadblocks.

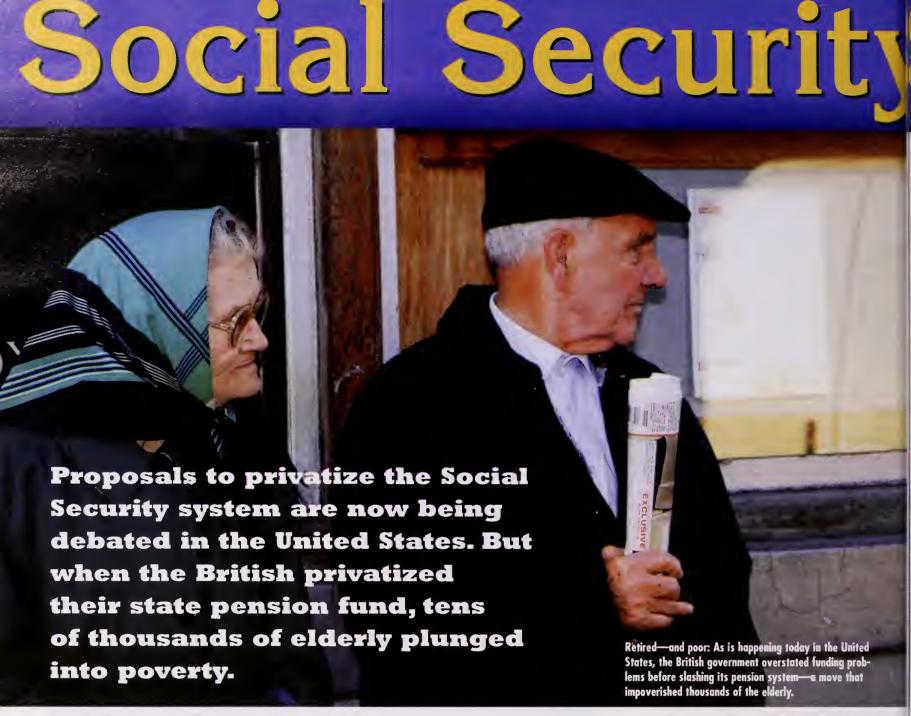
four of those countics, and currently is organizing the 75,000 home care workers in Los Angeles County, where county supervisors recently created a public authority.

Long-term community connections

Mobilizing community support, like political action, is not a new organizing strategy. What's new is the strategic, consistent way in which connections to the community are being made—and maintained—long before and after support is recruited for a specific campaign. In New York City, Musicians Local 802 spearheaded a community-wide effort to persuade The New School to recognize the union as the representative of its 69-member jazz musician faculty. Months before the campaign began, Local 802 developed a database of 1,000 elected officials, key entertainers, jazz organizations, religious leaders and labor leaders. Union organizers sent brochures and materials and asked individuals to support the union's efforts to organize jazz musicians. Organizers followed up with those who had indicated interest, asking them to call the school at a critical point in the campaign. "The school is going to think twice when it gets letters, calls or faxes from U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) or Mayor (Rudy) Giuliani," Dubnau says. It worked: In December 1997, the union won recognition.

Ultimately, organizers say, the success of any campaign to sign up part-time, temporary or on-call workers depends on the union's commitment. "Unions have to be willing to commit resources—time, people and money—and a lot of thought to how they will organize these workers," Chavez says. "It's the only way to keep the union movement strong."





BY FRED J. SOLOWEY

FRED SOLOWEY

The nation's first forum to discuss the future of Social Security brought together a cross-section of workers in April for a public debate on ensuring that Social Security is here for future generations.

But the participants in the Kansas City forum—the first of four Save Social Security First dialogues launched by President Clinton—have sharply different stakes in the debate.

On one hand, there are the 44 million Americans who now rely on Social Security and the tens of millions more counting on it for guaranteed retirement income.

For these workers, it's time to deal with Social Security's funding problems—the result of an aging and older population—by protecting and strengthening the most successful government social program in history.

But for others, especially profit-hungry Wall Street firms and the antigovernment conservative organizations funded by these corporate interests, now's the time to radically change—or even end—Social Security as we know it.

Corporate more makers and the radical right wing want to scare Americans into belieting that Social Security will go completely bankrupt They believe that today's young workers should receive retirement benefits generated from their own individual Social Security accounts invested in the stock market. Some privatizers claim that such a system would turn an average worker into a wealthy retiree.

Among the many variations of privatization schemes is a plan to replace Social Security with individual retirement accounts. There are also proposals that would shift portions of current Social Security taxes into individual accounts.

But however it's configured, any privatization plan actually would increase Social Security's funding problems. The reason: While retirement benefits owed to current retirees and soon-to-retire workers still would have to be paid, much of the Social Security tax that would have reimbursed those benefits would be channeled instead into the private accounts.

To fund those benefits and to prevent the federal deficit from ballooning, Social Security taxes would have to be raised drastically—or Social Security benefits and other vital government services such as education would have to be slashed.

Instead of receiving guaranteed Social Security benefits, tomorrow's retiree would be forced to ride the ups and downs of the stock market. A drop in the market before retirement or a sustained slump could mean a retirement lived in poverty for workers counting on Social Security for a major chunk of their retirement income.

Scare

But there's more. By spreading the cost among all workers, Social Security now provides hundreds of thousands of dollars in life and disability insurance protection for all workers and their families at no extra expense. Such insurance would be extremely expensive if working families had to purchase it individually. In addition, everyone with a private account would have to pay hefty fees to investment companies for managing investment accounts.

All of these potential problems are already happening in Great Britain, which, beginning in the 1980s, went a long way toward privatizing its state pension fund.

First step: Declare a crisis

Built over decades with strong union support, British Social Security reached its high point when a 1970s union-backed Labor Government boosted benefits in basic Social Security, protected them against erosion and added a second benefit tier—the State Earnings Related Pensions Scheme (SERPS)—for workers not covered by pension benefits through their employers.

"My mom and dad worked all their lives, and Social Security is all they get now," says British postal worker and Communications Workers Union (CWU) steward Alan Smith. "Back in the 1970s, Social Security provided a livable pension."

But then came the 1979 election of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and 18 years of extreme Conservative Party rule. Glorifying the unfettered "free market," Thatcher pushed through a series of anti-union laws, spent an estimated \$8 billion to defeat the miners union, engaged in wholesale privatization of state-owned enterprises and government services and shredded the nation's once model safety net while enriching the already well-to-do.

And Thatcher, often quoted as saying "there is no such thing as society," began attacking one of Britain's crowning achievements—Social Security—by warning of a funding crisis.

As is happening today in the United States, "the Thatcher government's Social Security cost projections were overstated and were scare tactics and ideological," charges Peter Morris, research director of UNISON, Britain's largest public-sector union.

Thatcher slashed benefits for both tiers of Social Security. Today, the weekly individual basic benefit is about \$108, points out Damian McCarthy, pension expert for the Transport and General Workers (T&G), Britain's largest union. Without Thatcher's attacks, weekly benefits would be \$148. A worker retiring in 2020 will get a SERPS pension worth only half of the 1978 value.

"As a result, my parents and millions of other retirees are really hurting," adds postal worker Smith.

UNISON member Shona Hastings, a 28-year public employee who staffs a public housing office, painfully recalls what happened to her own parents as a result of the cuts.

"My father died early, at age 64, and my mother died in poverty, both of them having worked all

their lives. I had to take out a bloody loan just to bury her," Hastings says.

But the Conservatives plowed ahead. "After intentionally creating a disaster by slashing Social Security, they offered a solution that wouldn't work," says Balhl Singh Sohal, a T&G steward at a Ford plant near London.

Second step: Peddle private pension scams

The "solution" was the 1986

servatives sought to destroy not only SERPS, but defined-benefit company pensions. They offered tax rebates and other generous financial incentives to encourage workers to opt out and open individual private pension accounts. By 1993, more than 5 million people had taken the bribes, lured also by insurance company promises of lavish pensions.

National Union of Miners member Jeremy Hart was one of the more than 1.7 million workers estimated by government regulators to have been duped into taking the individual savings route.

"In 1988, salesmen were coming around to the pit [mine] and contacting my wife and I at home," recalls the 33-year-old father of two. "It all sounded so good—the forecasts of big returns—and they got me to buy an expensive life insurance policy too."

But what Hart found was that he was paying big commissions for inferior benefits. Noting the stock market's volatility last November, Hart

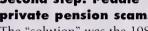
> says that it "went something scary. You want your pension money to be there for you. You can't gamble with it.'

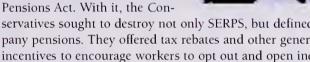
Telephone worker and CWU member Colin Bell, 34, bought the promises too. "I was missold. All of my contributions were eaten up in administrative costs," he explains. "Lucky for me, the union was able to get me back into the British Telephone plan. It has good benefits that I can count on."

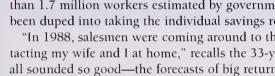
CWU member Dick Freyne wasn't so lucky. In his mid-thirties, he opted out into a private, individual pension scheme. But he soon had a disabling injury—and his individual plan, which had pulled him out of Social Security, provided no disability benefits.

The assault on Social Security severely affected British women "who earn less and usia ally have gaps in employment due to child ing," points out Joanne Segars, pension for the Trades Union Congress, Britan divalent of the AFL-CIO

"When we first started a women's usion hot line last year, 4,00° women got through, but over







Scommed: When telephone worker and union member Colin Bell bought into the government's privotization scheme, he lost oll his pension contributions in administrative costs.

FRED SOLOWEY



100,000 couldn't," Segars notes, citing "the mess so many women are in and their desperation."

Third step: Tally the cost of collapse

Meanwhile, deep poverty grows in this nation once known for its safety nets, and pension coverage declines in the cut-throat economy. Increasing numbers of retirees try to make it on slashed Social Security benefits and many current workers pin their hopes on individual savings accounts that won't deliver.



FRED SOLOWEY

Women hit hard: The assault on Social Security severely affected British women "who earn less and usually have gaps in employment due to child rearing," says Joanne Segars, TUC pension officer.

"These private pension plans are scams," adds T&G's McCarthy. "You simply can't save enough to get a decent pension from these private schemes—and still survive—if you're earning an average wage."

As the government deals with the results of a failed system, the projected "savings" from benefit cuts may never be realized. The cost of the pension privatization push already may be more than \$30 billion. As far as many British union members are concerned, that money was taken from other vital services like health care and education.

Sitting in her UNISON branch office, Nora Pearce, a nurse midwife, adds an impassioned plea to American workers: "With Social Security privatization, people here were sacrificed on the altar of money," she says, citing long waiting lines for health care and a sharp increase in class sizes in schools.

"They've mortgaged the future with Social Security privatization," adds Morris of UNISON. "The British public would never support it now."

Fred J. Solowey is a labor journalist and co-chair of the Washington, D.C., local of the National Writers Union (UAW Local 1981).

Taking the Message to Members

Union leaders can play a key role in educating members about the issues in the Social Security debate. While respecting workers' anxieties, it's critical to point out that Social Security is not in danger of going "bankrupt." Instead:

- Give members the facts to understand that protecting, reforming and strengthening Social Security for future generations is a safe, workable alternative to proposals that would scrap Social Security and replace it with a radical, untested alternative.
- Highlight the risk inherent in any system that would rely substantially on privatized investment accounts, and emphasize the importance of a guaranteed monthly income that can never be lost as the foundation of a secure retirement.
- Point out that all privatization plans call for substantial increases in the payroll tax (to pay for transition costs). Tax increases must occur only to shore up the solvency of Social Security for everyone, and any participation in private accounts must be voluntary.
- Recognize that Social Security will not provide an adequate income for most retired workers, and call for strengthening the other two "legs" of the three-legged retirement stool: better pension coverage from employers and expanded opportunities for tax-advantaged private savings.
- Discuss how a public policy package that strengthens the longte m finances of the system takes time, and should include reform me sures that preven, fraud and misappropriation of funds.



What's Right With Social Security?

Looking past the scare tactics, it's clear there's a lot right with Social Security. For instance:

- Social Security is a social insurance program that provides millions of American with benefits.
 - Some 43 million Americans received benefits in 1995 under Social Security's Old-Age, Survivor, and Disability Insurance programs (OASDI). This group includes 26 million elderly retirees, 6 million spouses and children, 7 million survivors of deceased workers and 4 million disabled workers.
- Social Security benefits save many retirees from poverty.

 In 1995, the benefits paid by Social Security exceeded \$340 billion. These benefits, in combination with Medicare health insurance, have dramatically reduced poverty for the elderly. In 1959, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that more than 35 percent of elderly Americans were poor. By 1994, in large part because of changes in the Social Security system, the poverty rate among senior citizens was 11.7 percent.
- Only 13 percent of women 65 and older receive a private pension, compared with 33 percent of men.

Thirty-seven percent of older women living alone rely on Social Security for at least 90 percent of their income.

- Social Security benefits to survivors and to the disabled would be difficult to match through private policies.
 - More than 7 million survivors of deceased workers (including 1.4 million children) receive benefits under Old-Age Survivors and Disability Insurance. Some 5.5 million workers and their spouses and children receive monthly cash benefits for severe and prolonged disabilities. A private, personally financed retirement and disability insurance policy similar to OASDI for a 27-year-old, average-wage worker with two children is equivalent to a \$295,000 policy.
- Younger workers are least likely to have jobs that provide adequate life insurance or to be able to afford to purchase such insurance themselves.
 - Social Security provides \$12.1 trillion in life insurance protection, an amount that exceeded by \$1.3 trillion the combined value of all private life insurance policies in the United States in 1993.
- Social Security benefits are work-related.
- Because Social Security is a social insurance program, it is structured so that workers with very low wages are guaranteed a minimum benefit. This progressive feature of Social Security helps give all workers in America a chance at a decent retirement, even if their type of work, or personal circumstances, do not enable them to accumulate wealth or become eligible for private pension plans.
- There is little waste in the system.

 Administrative costs for Social Security are about 1 percent of benefits.

 According to the American Council of Life Insurance, administrative costs for private insurance are between 12 and 14 percent of annual benefit amounts.
- Social Security has enjoyed broad public support since its creation.
 Recent studies show that about 90 percent of Americans favor the
 continuation of Social Security, and most would be willing to pay
 higher taxes to maintain the Social Security system.

Source: Twentieth Century Fund



MARILYN HUMPHRIES/IMPACT VISUALS

AS LONG AS THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE THE NATION'S LAWS AND SHAPE GOVERNMENT **POLICY LOOK TO CORPORATE** AMERICA AND THE RADICAL RIGHT FOR THEIR MARCHING ORDERS, THEY AREN'T LIKELY TO CHAMPION AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE, EMPLOYER-PROVIDED PENSIONS AND A LIVING WAGE FOR ALL WORKERS. ELECTING WORKER-FRIENDLY LAWMAKERS TO OFFICE IS CRITICAL TO PASSAGE OF A WORKING FAMILIES AGENDA. GETTING UNION MEMBERS TO VOTE IS THE FIRST STEP.

BY MIKE HALL

n Election Day in November 1996, Rep. Jon Fox (R-Pa.) won re-election by just 84 votes. On March 19, 1997, Fox voted for a bill that would gut the 40-hour week by letting bosses substitute comp time for cash overtime pay. In that Pennsylvania congressional district, 15,000 union members were not even registered to vote.

Voters in Washington State's Third Congressional District sent Rep. Linda Smith (R) back to the U.S. House of Representatives by an 887-vote margin in 1996. Last June, Smith voted "yes" on a tax bill that, if passed, would have given big breaks to the wealthy and large corporations, and at the same time would have allowed employers to reclassify millions of workers as independent contractors, stripping them of pension and health benefits and many other labor law protections. Unregistered union members in that distributed 17,534.

In nine other races that fall, candidates who had pledged to stand by working families and their unions lost by margins ranging from 1,200 to 4,200 votes. The number of union members in each district who had not registered to vote stood between 13,000 and 31,000.

If those races, decided by a total of just 23,777 votes, had swung the other way, House Speaker Newt "Contract on America" Gingrich and Majority Leader Dick "I will fight the minimum wage increase with every fiber of my being" Armey would be leading the minority, not majority, party in the House. The 203,681 unregistered union members in those 11 districts could have made the difference.

This fall, if the millions of unregistered union members and their families stay out of the voting booth, working families will see even more attacks on their political rights—the "paycheck deception" acts, more attacks on workers' right to organize, more attacks on workplace safety, more attacks on health care and retirement security and more attacks on the few restraints that keep good jobs from being shipped out of the country.

As long as the men and women who make the nation's laws and shape government policy look to corporate America and the radical right for their marching orders, a Working Families Agenda—one that encompasses affordable health care, employer-provided pensions and a living wage for all workers—stands little chance.

John Cairns, president of the Union Citiesenrolled Montgomery County, Pa., Central Labor Council, knows just how important it is to persuade union members to register to vote. He points to Fox, the 84-vote victor, as a clear example of how workers can be threatened by federal representatives.

At the state level, where many worker issues



are decided, Cairns says the Workers Compensation Act in Pennsylvania is "getting crucified" with bills that are destroying workers' rights under the state law. Wages also came under attack when anti-worker lawmakers went after the state's prevailing wage laws.

Cairns knows what it takes to beat back these attacks and fight for a Working Families Agenda: "We've got to get people registered and more involved."

When union membership is mobilized, it makes a difference. In 1992, 19.7 million union household members voted and accounted for 19 percent of all voters that year. That turnout helped end a dozen years of antiworker White House administrations. But two years later, when union voters dropped to 10

million and just 14 percent of the turnout, right-wing extremists and their anti-worker agenda, embodied in the misnamed Contract With America, took control of Congress. Two years later, Labor '96—the union movements unique membership mobilization—started to turn the tide: 22 million union voters went to the polls and cast 23 percent of the votes. That effort knocked 10 anti-worker representatives out of office and sent the "contract" to the shredder. In the coming election year and beyond, union members must be mobilized on an unprecedented scale.

Needed: 4 million new union household voters

To point lawmakers in a more worker-friendly direction by motivating their members to register to vote, Labor '98 volunteers will make registering union members and their families their first priority when they hit the field. About 40 percent, or 5.2 million union workers, are not signed up; adding family members to that figure creates an unregistered pool of about 16 million potential voters. The AFL-CIO aims to sign up 4 million new union household voters by 2000.

A cornerstone of the drive to register union members is the creation of volunteer programs with a voter registration point person in each local union. Workers will be encouraged to sign up to vote by a combination of worksite drives, home visits and communications from their local unions. State federations, central labor councils and affiliates will work together to find

SEATS ANTI-WORKER CANDIDATES WON BY 5,000 VOTES OR LESS IN 1996

| State | Candidate | Vote Margin | Unreg. Members | 25% of Unreg. |
|-------|------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| PA-13 | Fox, Jon | 84 | 14,985 | 3,746 |
| WA-3 | Smith, Linda | 887 | 17,534 | 4,383 |
| IL-20 | Shimkus, John | 1,238 | 19,895 | 4,973 |
| KY-3 | Northup, Anne | 1,299 | 18,184 | 4,546 |
| CT-6 | Johnson, Nancy | 1,587 | 16,788 | 4,197 |
| WA-2 | Metcalf, Jack | 1,927 | 17,202 | 4,300 |
| AZ-6 | Hayworth, J.D. | 2,474 | 13,301 | 3,325 |
| PA-21 | English, Philip | 2,871 | 21,755 | 5,438 |
| AL-4 | Aderholt, Robert | 3,491 | 14,245 | 3,561 |
| IN-8 | Hostettler, John | 3,659 | 18,050 | 4,512 |
| WI-1 | Neumann, Mark | 4,260 | 31,742 | 7,935 |

local leaders to help establish these programs.

Registration deadlines for the fall election may be months away, but some unions already have started big campaigns to get their members on the voting lists. In April, the Steelworkers kicked off a six-week drive through its Rapid Response system. Each Steelworkers local received a letter from union President George Becker with a list of registered and unregistered members in the local, along with instructions on how to register them according to the state's specific laws.

"This is based on one-on-one contact in-plant or at the worksite. We have teams in each workplace, and each team member is assigned so many workers," says Stan Daniels, the USWA National Rapid Response Coordinator.

The union began laying the groundwork for the drive earlier this year with a series of "infofaxes" to locals as part of its Rapid Response program (see the February America@work). The faxes compared the corporate agenda to the Working Families Agenda, and explained "that the only way to win a Working Families Agenda is to vote in a new Congress," says Daniels. A second USWA fax pointed out the close races that could have swung control of the House if just 25 percent of unregistered union members had voted.

"Folks have really responded to the message that if we register, we could really make a difference," Daniels says. "The locals are pretty pumped up about this. You know, we've spent 18 months talking about issues and now it's coming time to vote, and they understand this is the next logical step."

The Laborers also has put its voter registration drive into gear this spring. In Idaho and Washington State, 12 LIUNA locals have turned to their computers to help track their mobile, 10,000-member base that includes the district of anti-worker Rep. Linda Smith (R), whose 887-vote margin carried to her victory.

Local union registration rates range from a low of 40 percent to a high of 90 percent, says Bruce McNeil, business manager and financial secretary for the Washington and Northern Idaho District Council of Laborers. Along with the lists of unregistered voters, local leaders are visiting job sites where they distribute registration forms that encourage members to sign up and help register their spouses and dependents.

The district is providing each local with a computer disk that lists all registered voters in each congressional district. The locals, all of which have been wired for several years, will run programs that match membership rolls with voting lists. The result: a target list for

voter registration efforts.

LIUNA's registration drive goes hand in hand with its voter education efforts, McNeil says. "We've been bringing the issues to them over the years and we're telling them, 'we want you to vote. We don't care if you're a Republican, a Democrat or an Independent, but we do want you to be informed and to understand the issues that affect us as union members and working families."

Unions aren't the only groups trying to level the political playing field for regular folks. CLCs and state feds plan not only to register union members, but to work with likeminded interest groups such as civil rights, women's, religious and environmental organizations to register their members who are likely to share labor's concerns.

ANTI-WORKER CANDIDATES IN

11 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

WON BY A TOTAL OF 23,777

VOTES IN THE 1996 ELECTIONS.

THE RESULTS WOULD HAVE

BEEN MUCH DIFFERENT IF THE

203,681 UNREGISTERED UNION

MEMBERS IN THOSE DISTRICTS

HAD GONE TO THE POLLS.

DO MEMBERS THINK ONE VOTE DOESN'T COUNT? THE RADICAL RIGHT SURE THINKS IT DOES.

When you go out on a voter registration drive, be ready for a union sister or brother to tell you, "Hey, it doesn't matter. My vote won't count." After pointing out the hair's-breadth losses that sent many anti-worker lawmakers to office in 1996, here's another argument you can use: Tell them how desperately the opponents of working families try to keep workers from the polls.

In the past decade, big-business-friendly state and federal lawmakers—mostly Republican—fought the Motor Voter Act, which makes voter registration easier and enables more people to get to the polls. Under the law, citizens can register to vote when they apply for drivers licenses or other government permits. Some lawmakers feared, though rarely stated publicly, that more low-income and minority voters—not traditional friends of corporate America—would be added to voter rolls.

The radical right lost that fight, and in 1993, Motor Voter became the law of the land (although a few die-hard governors still are wasting taxpayer dollars fighting the law in the courts). Motor Voter added 13.7 million voters to the rolls in 1995–1996 alone.

There also have been covert efforts to keep voters away from ballot boxes through political tricks designed to scare or fool unsuspecting voters. Fliers found in and around predominately low-income precincts during New Jersey's 1996 elections are a good example.

The fliers warned that computers linked to federal, state and local agencies could be placed in voting machines to check on traffic and criminal warrants and parole and probation violations; uncover welfare cheating on food stamps and Aid to Dependent Children; spotlight low-income housing and Medicaid fraud; and search for student loan default or failure to file income taxes.

If that wasn't enough, the fliers cautioned that there could be "plainclothes detectives at each polling place." Similar pamphlets, of course, were not reported in high-voter-turnout Republican precincts, and no one took responsibility for distributing the crude attempts to intimidate low-income voters.

Now, the U.S. House is considering legislation that would require citizenship checks for people registering to vote. Backers claim it's an effort to stamp out voter fraud—even though there have been few such incidents. But opponents say it's a thinly veiled attack on Hispanic and Asian voters.

"They want to create an unwarranted fear of the Hispanic community in the eyes of our fellow Americans....Latino voters are American voters. When we vote, we remember who stood with us and who stood against us," says Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D -ill.).

If the law ever passed, which name would be more likely to be double-checked for circumship, Gutierrez or Gingrich?

Every vote counts

Once union members register to vote, there is no guarantee they will go to the polls—and that's why get-out-the-vote drives will be essential as November's elections approach. A look at two races where unions waged large-scale registration drives shows that every vote counts.

In Orange County, Calif. (the spiritual birthplace of modern far-right politics), Loretta Sanchez (D) pulled off the upset victory of 1996 when she defeated one of the most extreme anti-worker members of Congress, nine-term Rep. Robert Dornan (R). In Louisiana, Mary Landrieu (D) won that state's open U.S. Senate seat despite a well-funded, big-business campaign that backed radical right-winger Republican Woody Jenkins. Union and minority voter turnout made the difference in both races, and sent worker-friendly candidates to office.

To ensure that a Working Families Agenda becomes the blueprint for a new direction in government—one where the interests of workers and their families take precedence over the greed of corporate America—union members need to multiply wins like those of Sanchez and Landrieu several times over this November. And the first step to victory is to register members to vote.



THE RADICAL RIGHT FAILED TO

PREVENT PASSAGE OF THE 1993

MOTOR VOTER ACT, WHICH

ADDED 13.7 MILLION VOTERS

TO THE ROLLS IN 1995-1996

ALONE.

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINES

Remember, if you want to see the union movement's Working Families Agenda succeed, you've got to help elect local, state and federal lawmakers who will fight for families instead of sidling up to big business. Your members can't vote unless they are registered. Here are the primary election and general election registration deadlines for all 50 states. The general election is Tuesday, November 3.

| State | Primary Date | Primary Registration Deadline | General Election Registration Deadline |
|-------|--------------|----------------------------------|---|
| AK | 8/25/98 | 7/26/98 | 10/04/98 |
| AL | 6/02/98 | 5/22/98 | 10/23/98 |
| AR | 5/19/98 | 4/20/98 | 10/05/98 |
| AZ | 9/08/98 | 8/10/98 | 10/05/98 |
| CA | 6/02/98 | 5/04/98 | 10/05/98 |
| CO | 8/11/98 | 7/13/98 | 10/05/98 |
| CT | 9/15/98 | 9/10/98 | 10/20/98 |
| DC | 9/15/98 | 8/17/98 | 10/05/98 |
| DE | 9/12/98 | 8/22/98 | 10/13/98 |
| FL | 9/01/98 | 8/03/98 | 10/05/98 |
| GA | 7/21/98 | 6/22/98 | 10/05/98 |
| HI | 9/19/98 | 8/20/98 | 10/05/98 |
| IA | 6/02/98 | 5/23/98 | 10/24/98 |
| ID* | 5/26/98 | 5/26/98 | 10/09/98 |
| IL | 3/17/98 | 2/17/98 | 10/06/98 |
| IN | 5/05/98 | 4/06/98 | 10/05/98 |
| KS | 8/04/98 | 7/20/98 | 10/19/98 |
| KY | 5/26/98 | 4/27/98 | 10/05/98 |
| LA | 10/03/98 | 9/08/98 | 10/09/98 |
| MA | 9/15/98 | 8/26/98 | 10/14/98 |
| MD | 9/15/98 | 8/17/98 | 10/05/98 |
| ME* | 6/09/98 | 6/09/98 | 11/03/98 |
| MI | 8/04/98 | 7/06/98 | 10/05/98 |
| MN | 9/15/98 | 8/25/98 | 10/13/98 |
| MO | 8/04/98 | 7/08/98 | 10/07/98 |
| MS | 6/02/98 | 5/01/98 | 10/02/98 |
| MT | 6/02/98 | 5/04/98 | 10/05/98 |
| NC | 5/05/98 | 4/10/98 | 10/09/98 |
| ND | 6/09/98 | 6/09/98 | 11/03/98 |
| NE | 5/12/98 | 5/01/98 | 10/23/98 |
| NH | 9/08/98 | 8/29/98 | 10/24/98 |
| NJ | 6/02/98 | 5/04/98 | 10/05/98 |
| NM | 6/02/98 | 5/05/98 | 10/06/98 |
| NV | 9/01/98 | 8/01/98 | 10/03/98 |
| NY | 9/15/98 | 8/21/98 | 10/14/98 |
| ОН | 5/05/98 | 4/06/98 | 10/05/98 |
| OK | 8/25/98 | 7/31/98 | 10/09/98 |
| OR | 5/19/98 | 4/28/98 | 10/13/98 |
| PA | 5/19/98 | 4/20/98 | 10/05/98 |
| RI | 9/15/98 | 8/17/98 | 10/03/98 |
| SC | 6/09/98 | 5/09/98 | 10/03/98 |
| SD | 6/02/98 | 5/18/98 | 10/19/98 |
| TN | 8/06/98 | 7/07/98 | 10/02/98 |
| TX | 3/10/98 | 2/08/98 | 10/05/98 |
| UT | 6/23/98 | 6/03/98 | 10/14/98 |
| VA | 6/09/98 | 5/11/98 | 10/05/98 |
| VT | 9/08/98 | 8/29/98 | 10/24/98 |
| WA | 9/15/98 | 8/31/98 | 10/19/98 |
| WI≭ | 9/08/98 | 9/08/98 | 11/03/98 |
| WV | 5/12/98 | 4/13/98 | 10/05/98 |
| WY | 8/18/98 | 7/17/98 | 10/02/98 |

^{*}States that permit election day registration.

Like II Is

A Portrait of Working America in the Faces of Our Children

Picture a nation where 69 percent of poor children live in families where someone works. A nation where more than 14 million children don't have access to basic nutrition, health care or quality education—even though their parents hold one, two or more jobs.

That's the snapshot of America illustrated in *The State of America's Children 1998*, the annual report published by The Children's Defense Fund. CDF documents how despite a growing economy, the number of poor children in working families is on the rise. In 1996, 69 percent of children living in poverty were in homes where someone worked, up from 61 percent just three years earlier. For young mothers who began the 1980s on welfare and later worked, average hourly wages rose only six cents per year—reaching just \$6.85 an hour in 1990.

Replacing welfare with below-poverty wages does not lessen a poor child's likelihood of suffering from a serious disability, iron deficiency or falling behind in school. Children whose parents are not on welfare but whose earnings are at or below the poverty level do not qualify for Medicaid or food stamps and the basic health care and nutrition they provide. More than nine in 10 children not covered by health care insurance have working parents; two-thirds of recent spending cuts for food stamps affect families with children, including poor working families. As CDF makes clear, children living in extreme or prolonged poverty tend to suffer disproportionately from stunted growth and lower test scores; poverty among pre-school children is likely to have damaging effects on school completion many years later.

This portrait of a nation that neglects its poorest children is a reflection of what's happening in our nation today. Declining family wages and continued job insecurity are just two reasons America's working families are concerned that their children will be swept into the downward slide of the past two decades. The prosperity of the 1990s has not been shared, and the wage gap between the richest and the poorest is widening. For instance:

• Up to 12.5 million more workers will lose their health insurance coverage by 2002, according to a recent study by the AFL-CIO, joining the 41.7 million workers already lacking health care insurance. Employers shifting a large portion of the cost of health insurance to workers will force many employees to forego coverage.

- Hundreds of thousands of full-time workers are unable to earn a living wage. Working full time, year-round at the minimum wage (\$5.15 an hour), a worker earned \$10,712 in 1997—\$2,000 less than the poverty level for a family of three (\$12,803 a year).
- More than two-thirds of retirees depend on Social Security for 50 percent or more of their income. Yet some lawmakers, backed by special interests, seek to privatize Social Security or switch it to individually-controlled retirement accounts—although either option could leave many retirees destitute because of investments gone bad.

Working families fight back

A family's income directly affects the future of its children. For example, studies have shown a direct link between a rise in annual income and the likelihood a child will finish school. CDF estimates that for every year that 14.5 million children are poor, the diminished productivity that results will cost a total of \$130 billion in lost future economic output.

One way unions and our allies are working to move children out of poverty is by advancing a Working Families Agenda. We support bills in both houses of Congress that would raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 an hour, proposals to strengthen equal pay laws and efforts to require employers with more than 50 employees to provide and contribute to worker pension programs. Together, we are backing the Patient Bill of Rights in Congress, aimed at giving workers the tools to fight improper and unfair decisions by HMOs. We are urging employers with 50 or more employees to pay at least 75 percent of the health care premium for their workers. We are working with employers, retiree organizations and others to involve American workers and retirees in a national discussion about how best to protect and strengthen Social Security. Underlying all these efforts is the struggle to restore workers' right to organize unions to improve their lives-and gain the strength in numbers necessary to make a difference.

Affordable, quality health care and child care, a decent education, secure pensions, equal pay, a living wage and fair pay and benefits for part-time workers are all key to closing the wealth and wage gap between the rich and working families—and to



A Union-Community Partnership That Computes

esidents of National City Park, a 450-unit low-income apartment complex in San Diego, now can access the Internet in their own computer lab, as a result of a joint project by union volunteers, union employers and the Sweetwater School District.

The Intergenerational Learning Centre, with its banks of 24 computers, has become a hub of activity in what was an unused recreation room. The project was the brainchild of Art Lucan, business manager of the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council.

Wired: A union—com-

munity partnership in San Diego enables

low-income students

According to Al Shur, business manager of Electrical Workers Local 569, Lucan "talked up the idea and we got the ball rolling." Union members rewired the entire room to provide power to the work stations, and installed new lighting. Apprentices from Carpenters Local 547 built desks

from materials donated by their employers; Carpet Layers Local 1711 carpeted the floors; and Painters Local 333 members put the finishing touches on the room—all at no cost to the apartment complex or the school district.

The center provides daytime classes for special and alternative education students, afternoon tutoring for the complex's 800-plus students and evening classes for adults.

Cood Morning, Cleveland!

hen was the last time you tuned into a radio talk show in the morning and heard an indepth discussion about workers' wages?

If you're in Cleveland, finding a talk show geared toward workers' issues is as easy as turning the dial to *America's Workforce*, on the air from 7 to 8 a.m, Monday through Friday on WERE-AM. A project of the Cleveland AFL-CIO and BMA Media Group, the show features a wide variety of work-based topics.

In one recent program, a local union president and a county manager discussed the serious problems social service caseworkers face on the job. "When both sides were heard, the workers clearly won out," says John Ryan, executive secretary of the council.

Hosted by well-known local talk show personality and AFTRA member Ed Esposito, the show is part of the CLC's Union Cities program. "The most important thing with the Union Cities approach is using various techniques to reach out to the community," says Ryan. "We saw this as just one more way to reach out to the community and working people."

The program, sponsored by the Ohio Lottery, local unions and a few union-friendly employers, made its debut in 1997 to inform voters about a labor-backed ballot initiative to repeal an unfavorable workers' compensation law. Voters overwhelmingly backed the measure.

Where's the Popcorn?

hoppers at Albertson's Food & Drug Store in Tucson, Ariz., didn't need a coupon to get a little something extra in their grocery bags March 26. Every shopper received a free video, courtesy of the UFCW, which represents Albertson's employees. The video wasn't "Titanic," but by exposing the company's off-the-clock work and other practices alleged by the union, it could sink the way Albertson's treats its workers.

More than a dozen lawsuits alleging abuses have been filed against the company, the nation's fourth largest grocery chain. UFCW mailed 3,000 copies of the video to Tucson residents who live within a mile of the five area Albertson's.





laugh with AFTRA member Ed Esposito, host of the America's Workforce radio show in Cleveland.

Support Fund Aids Miners

Then a mine shuts down, it means lost jobs, shattered communities and even broken families. But with the help of Mine Workers Local 15, Illinois laid-off workers and their families have a place to turn.

In the past couple of years, the union has provided more than \$25,000 to mine families to help them respond to emergency financial crises-making a house payment, keeping the heat, lights and water turned on, putting food on

The idea for the program evolved from the Adopt-A-Family Fund set up in Decatur, Ill., during the hard-fought Caterpillar strike. "We said to ourselves, Why don't we continue on with it and help our own workers in the Mine Workers?," says Kenny Diez, Local 15 financial secretary.

Under a voluntary check-off, members-more than 90 percent of whom participate—contribute \$5 each pay period to fund the program.

"This program has been drastically important to several hundred families in southern Illinois," says Evin Galbraith of the Farm Resource Center, which screens applicants and refers them to Local 15. @

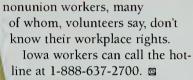
1-900-Worker Rights

ostly 900 numbers can't compete with the newest phone chat line. It's not only toll-free, it gives you something in return: advice on your rights as a worker. The Workers' Rights Hotline, the brainchild of Fred Risius, president of the Central Iowa Building Trades Council in Des Moines, gives Iowa employees a place to call to find out if the boss's actions are legal, or learn what to do if a worker's compensation claim isn't being

handled properly. The hotline is staffed by volunteers from Des Moines-area local unions, and their advice is backed by union attorneys.

Realizing a phone hotline can't generate business just by word of mouth, the council bought ads on one of the area's most popular radio morning shows, 98ROCK's Bob and Tom Show. The hotline is a real boon to

of whom, volunteers say, don't know their workplace rights.



UNION LINE

Spring Clean-Up

h, Spring! A time when thoughts turn toward romance-and mops, buckets, brushes and cleaners. This year, get ready for spring cleaning by shopping for products that are union made in the U.S.A., like these:

Members of the Food and Commercial Workers produce the following items: Blu-Flush bowl cleaner for Willert Home Products Inc.; Clorox bleach, Soft Scrub liquid cleaner, Pine-Sol disinfectant, Liquid Plumber and Fresh Step carpet freshener for Clorox Co.; Ajax liquid cleanser, Ajax window cleaner and Fab detergent for Colgate-Palmolive Co.; Scotch-Buy liquid cleanser for Purex (a division of Greyhound-Dial); Twice As Fresh air freshener for Purina Corp.; Hi-Lux brand bleach, ammonia, fabric softener and windshield washer fluid for Hi-Lux Corp.; Borateem bleach for U.S. Borax Chemical Corp. (a division of Greyhound-Dial).

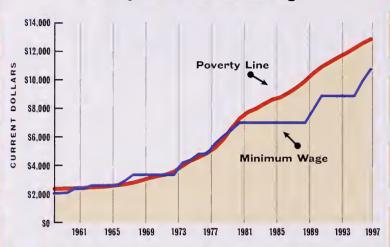
Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers make Calgon water conditioner, Electrosol dishwashing tablets, Scrub-Free cleanser, Jet Dry dishwasher additive, Cling Free anti-static sheets and Lime-Away lime remover; Clean 'N Smooth hand soap and Delicare laundry additive for Benckiser

Consumer Products.

Members of the Glass, Molders, Pottery Workers make Ecko brand brooms, brushes and other products for Wright-Bernet Inc. Steelworkers make Arm & Hammer baking soda and laundry detergent for Church & Dwight Co. Inc., and the Seafarers United Industrial Workers make Brillo and Purex Toss 'N Soft scouring pads for Dial Corp. Members of the Electrical Workers and the Sheet Metal Workers make White brand mops, buckets, dustpans, trash receptacles, mop handles, janitor carts, Mipro metal trash cans and napkin dispussers, Pullman/Holt floor scrubbers and vacuum systems for White Mop Wringer Co.

Steelworkers also produce Iona vacuum cleaners for Iona Appliances Inc.; Big Chief, Big Sweep Dutch Maid, Lite Swepe and Polyswepe brooms for Hamburg Broom Works Inc.; and U.S. Ca and Ballonoff waste paper baskets and copy dust pans for U.S. Can Co. @

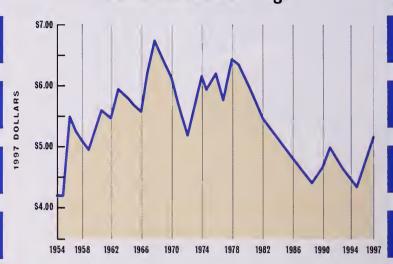
Poverty and the Minimum Wage



Working full time, year-round at the minimum wage (\$5.15 an hour), a worker earned \$10,712 in 1997—\$2,000 less than the poverty level (\$12,803 a year for a family of three).

Source: AFL-CIO Public Policy Deportment

Value of the Minimum Wage



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, "Yolve of the Federol Minimum Woge, 1954—1996." Real volve of the minimum woge was colculated using the CPI-U-X1. 1998—2000 estimates calculated using CPI-U-XI estimates from the CBO.

CEO pay was up by 536 percent over the past 17 years. The minimum wage fell 15 percent.

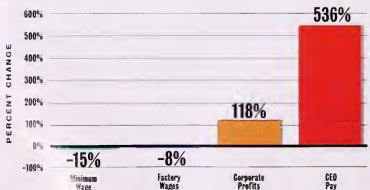
Guess who's fighting a minimum wage increase?

A BARE

In March, Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep.
David Bonior (D-Mich.) introduced bills in the
Senate and House to raise the minimum wage
to \$6.15 an hour—a move that would benefit
12 million workers. Corporate fat cats and
giant employer groups are lobbying Congress
to maintain the minimum wage at \$5.15 an
hour—which in 1997 was not enough to move a
family of three out of poverty.

CEO Pay Soars 536% Since 1980

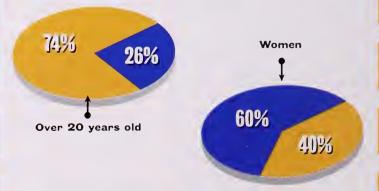
Minimum Wage and Factory Pay Fall in Inflation-Adjusted Terms



CEO pay is up \$36 percent since 1980—at the same time, the value of the minimum wage fell by \$15 percent. If minimum wage workers working all year full time had received pay in the cases comparable to those collected by CEOs, they would be paid \$80,500 a year anstead of the \$10,712 they actually made in 1997.

aurce: Business Week, various issues, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Minimum Wage Supports Working Families



The minimum wage isn't earned primarily by high school students—74 percent of minimum wage earners are older than 20, and 60 percent of minimum wage earners are women.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor/Democratic Policy Committee analysis

Documenting an Era

Faces of proud workers from the mills and mines of Pennsylvania stare back from vivid black-and-white photos, their expressions summing up lives scarred after the jobs of tens of thousands of manufacuring workers were exported.

Faces from an American Dream, a traveling art show by photographer and former steelworker Martin Desht, details the consequences of post-

industrial management greed, when jobs are moved overseas. On display through July 31 at Lafayette College in Easton, Pa., the exhibit includes interviews by historian Richard Sharpless, who traveled with Desht across Pennsylvania in the 1980s.

Desht, 48, says his father worked as a coal miner and

his father worked as a coal miner and shoe salesman before landing a well-paying job at Mack Truck.

"Absolutely, my dad had the American dream," Desht says. "Today is very different. We try to

show that through the ordinary folks for whom the dream has disappeared."

Dreams deferred: Faces

from an American Dream

through July 31.

is on exhibit in Easton, Pa.,

Desht's photographs also have been exhibited at the U.S. Capitol, the George Meany Memorial Archives in Maryland and the U.S. Department of Labor.

State Legislative Issues Conference Set

State federation officers and staff will meet July 17–19 in Las Vegas at the second annual Workers' Voice State Legislative Issues Conference, sponsored by the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department. The meeting takes place prior to the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) Annual Meeting, to enable state federation officers and staff to play a more effective role in NCSL deliberation and policy-making.

Sessions will include presentations on utility deregulation, worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, economic development and a joint session with union-friendly legislators attending the NCSL meeting.

The Frontier Hotel, where 550 workers recently returned to work after a nearly seven-year strike, is the tentative location. For more information, contact Frances Kenin in Field Mobilization at 202-637-5370.

Stand for Children

Last year, Stand for Children Day was a catalyst in a major victory on children's health care coverage. On June 1, the third Stand for Children Day will focus on quality child care. The AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions have played large roles in the hundreds of community events held nationwide each year, and are planning more events this year. For details, call 202-234-0095, visit: www.stand.org; or e-mail: standinfo@mailback.com.

SURFIN' THE WEB

Find the information you need about politics and candidate campaigns at these Internet sites. [Prefix for all of the following is http://www.]

NEWS

- CNN/Time Allpolitics allpolitics.com/1998/index.html
- The Hill—hillnews.com
- Roll Call—rollcall.com
- USA Today Politics usatoday.com/elect/elect96.htm
- Washington Post Politics washington post.com/wp-srv/politics
- Yahoo-Politics Summary dailynews.yahoo.com/headlines/politics

POLLS

- The Gallup Organization—gallup.com/index.html
- National Election Studies umich.edu/~nes

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Center for Responsive Politics crp.org/index.html/-ssi
- The Federal Elections Commission—fec.gov

STATE INFORMATION

- National Conference of State Legislatures—ncsl.org
- The Council of State Governments—csg.org

POLITICAL PARTIES

- Democratic National Committee democrats.org
- Republican National Committee—rnc.org

VOTERS

- CQs American Voters—voter.cq.com
- Rock The Vote—rockthevote.org
- Project Vote Smart—votesmart.org
- Southwest Voter Registration Education Project—wcvi.org

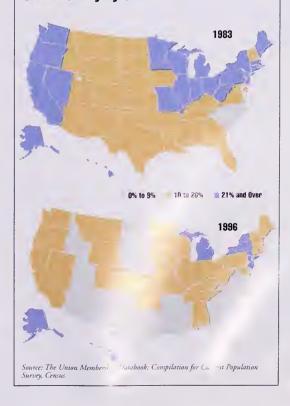
MISCELLANEOUS

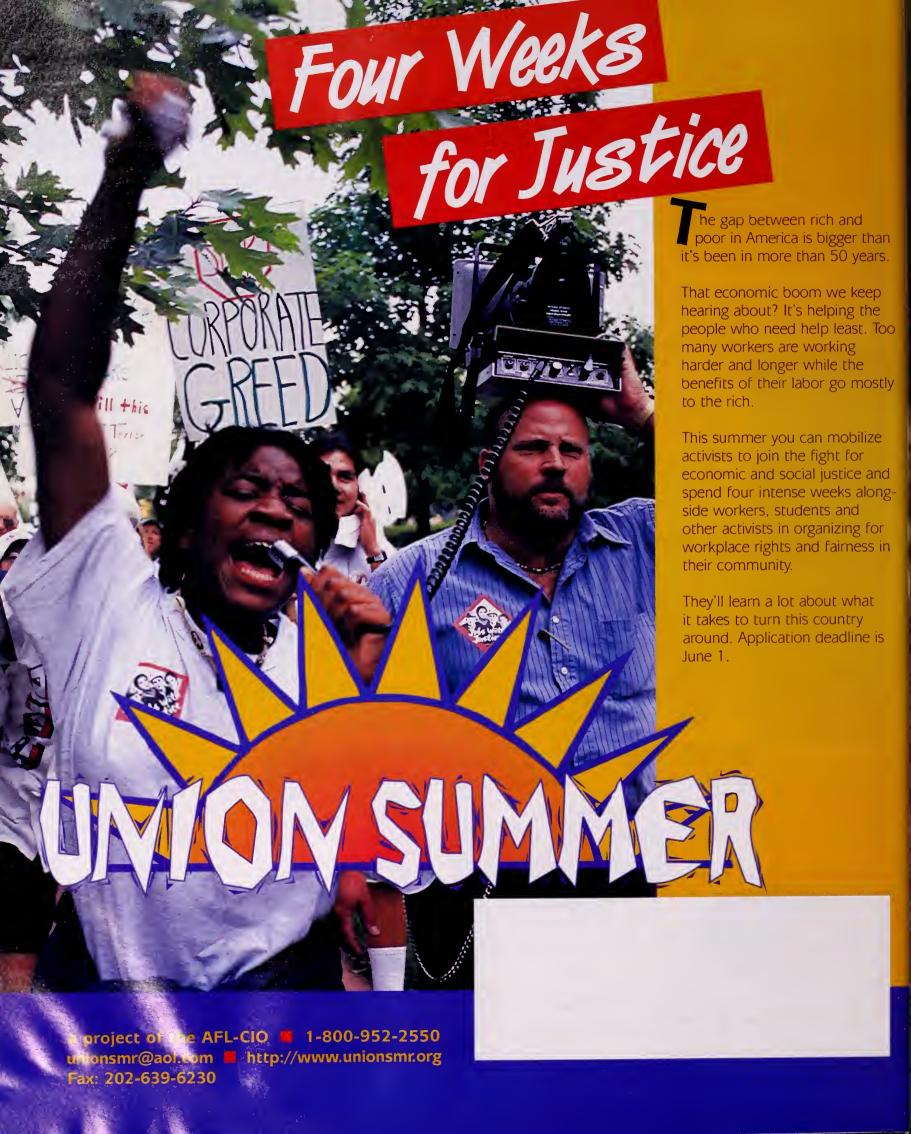
- Citizens for Tax Justice—ctj.org
- Public Campaign—publicampaign.org
- Elections USA—geocities.com/Capitol Hill/6228
- Emily's List—emilyslist.org
- Institute for Global Communications—igc.org/igc
- National Committee for an Effective Congress—ncec.org
- People for the American Way Foundation—pfaw.org
- League of Women Voters—lwv.org

Please Note:

"Union Density by State" maps in the April America@work (p. 15) should have appeared as follows:

Union Density by State





Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists

JUNE 1998

BRINGING CHILD LABOR The faces behind the products we buy

• THE 24-HOUR JOB 'ORGANIZE OR FAIL'



Ideas and Views From You

FOREIGN THREATS

(a) "I hope you are working to oppose any increase in the H-1B [special occupation visas for foreign workers] ceiling, currently set at 65,000 per year. This program has been a vehicle of choice for management to eliminate the jobs of older technical professionals and replace them with pliant younger workers, recruited at bargain-basement rates from around the world."—Gene Nelson, Carrollton,

(6) "I enjoy reviewing your 'Homepage' section in America@work....The Maritime Cabotage Task Force is made up of employers and labor unions that support maintaining a U.S.-flag maritime presence in the domestic waterborne trades of the United States.

"Recently our industry has been threatened by those who seek to bring foreign-flag vessels and crews into the domestic commerce of our nation. A corollary to this would be having Panamanian bus drivers and companies allowed to operate between San Francisco and Seattle....All of these firms would not be required to adhere to U.S. labor, tax or other regulations."—Rick Berkowitz, Pacific Coast director, Transportation Institute, Seattle, Wash.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY YOUR RESPONSE TO **HOW YOUR UNION IS ORGANIZING NONSTANDARD WORKERS**

@ "We represent hundreds of employees at community colleges, with one bargaining unit exclusively part time at Cuyahoga Community College. Almost all of our other bargaining units also have part-time workers. The biggest issue is health benefits, but it's the hardest to negotiate because it's so expensive for the employer. It's also difficult to organize around, because many workers receive benefits through their spouses. But everybody should have the option of having health insurance."—Avril Smith, organizer, SEIU District 925, Cleveland

When you see unions@work and our members@work and collective power in our communities@work. that's when you see

Say What?

How is your union changing to organize?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

America@work 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org



PREZ PRAISED

(a) [When AFL-CIO President John Sweeney spoke with workers in lowa], "the plant gate event and the visit to Prairie Meadows were highlights for many people.... A call I received this morning sums it up: 'I've been a union member for over 30 years, and it was a highlight to shake Sweeney's hand-not so much the handshake, but that he took the time and made the effort." -- Mark Smith, president, Iowa Federation of Labor (a) "My only wish would be that Mr. J. Sweeney were president of the United States by the time my children enter the American work force....would love to continue hearing about all that he is doing and has done for fellow citizens."—Mary Ann Thomas, Eugene (Ore.) Solidarity Network



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E-mail: atwark@aflcia.arg Internet: http://www.aflcia.arg



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sontents



Today, more than 100 local unions dedicate 10 to 20

percent of their resources to organizing, and the same number increased their organizing budgets. Here's how they are making it happen



Was that sweater or pair of running shoes you just bought made in a sweatshop abroad—or worse yet, made by children, toiling

in some of the most neglected corners of the world, out of the sight and consciousness of most Americans?

THE 24-HOUR JOB

In today's take-no-prisoners economy, union members, forced to work overtime on an unprecedented scale, are fighting mandatory overtime with strategic bargaining

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID PARKER

CURRENTS

A state paycheck deception act fails

following Florida

lines

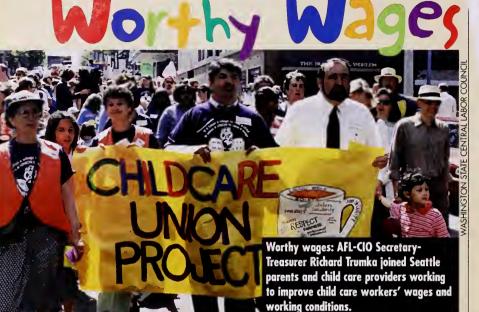
attendants, and more news

from the front

Street Heat; a

CLEYTUP

Parents and Child Care Workers Join for



ore than 600 Seattle parents, children and workers rallied May 1 as part of Working Together for Kids Day, an event that spotlighted the low wages paid to child care workers. Seattle's day of action was one of 35 events, including major rallies in Philadelphia, Madison, Wis., and Montpelier, Vt.

"This was the largest gathering we ever had," says Lauren Tozzi, a teacher and activist in the Seattle Childcare Union Project, an SEIU District 925 project that seeks to give caregivers a voice in child care funding policy decisions while promoting respect for their work. "There was a great feeling of solidarity."

King County activists seek a union-based solution to child care pay that averages \$6.89 an hour (\$12,058 a year), typically without health or retirement benefits, in an industry that has an annual turnover rate of 40 percent. Their efforts encouraged scores of child care workers to sign union cards during the day's events, which included a downtown march and rally, visits with AFL-CIO Secre-

tary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and Working Women's Department Director Karen Nussbaum and workshops on organizing and legislative strategies.

"Parents cannot afford higher rates, and centers cannot afford to improve pay and benefits on their own," says Mary Mosteller, who has taught at Vashon Children's Center for 25 years. "Funding must come from public sources."



Kathy Saumier

little more than a year after Kathy Saumier was fired for blowing the whistle on serious safety problems, and for leading a Steelwork-

ers fight to organize workers at the Landis Plastics plant in New York, the 36-year-old single mother of two was back on the job April 6.

"I'm hoping to go back in and do the job that I get paid for and finish the organizing campaign," Saumier told America@work in an interview that ran in February.

Earlier this year, a federal judge ruled that Landis had fired Saumier for her organizing efforts—not the trumped-up sexual harassment charges Saumier says management used as grounds for her dismissal. The judge ordered her return to work.

More than two dozen local clergy and union backers gathered for a brief prayer service before Saumier returned to work.

Ripe for Success

he United Farm Workers campaign to organize California's 20,000 strawberry workers produced a first contract with the state's largest organic strawberry grower. The agreement sets wages at between \$7 and \$11 an hour and provides paid holidays, health insurance coverage and a pension plan. The workers voted unanimously for UFW representation after Swanton Berry Farm owner Jim Cochran agreed to remain neutral during the organizing drive.

The historic agreement was signed at an April press con-

ference in the offices of San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown amid flats of ripe strawberries. UFW President Arturo Rodriguez called the contract "good news for the state's workers and consumers" and said it shows that if the employer stays neutral, workers can vote their choice. The contract is the eighteenth straight organizing win for the union since 1994.

Cochran, whose company employs between 40 and 50 workers during the growing season, supports the victory. "My customers care about the environment, but they also care about the conditions under which my berries are produced," hc says. "I'm glad to have the union label on my product."

RWDSU Leader Miller Retires

enore Miller, the first woman union president elected to the AFL-CIO Executive Council, retired from the council and as president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union in March. She was succeeded in both positions by Stuart Appelbaum, RWDSU's secretary-treasurer.

Miller was elected president of RWDSU in 1986 and moved onto the Executive Council the next year. Under her leadership, RWDSU successfully merged with the Food and Commercial Workers. She has served as chair of the Federation's civil rights committee and was active in Jewish-labor affairs. She also led the AFL-ClO's delegation of observers to the first multiracial elections in South Africa in 1994.



Montana Workers Bank on \$97 million

n April 30, the 1,000 employees at Columbia Falls Aluminum in Montana split a \$97 million settlement check stemming from a lawsuit against the company's owner—all because the union looked out for its members.

It began in 1985 when Brack Duker bought the failing plant from Atlantic Richfield for a symbolic \$1. In exchange for workers agreeing to a 21 percent cut in pay and benefits, Duker promised to share any profits equally with them if the aluminum industry rebounded.

One year later. Columbia Falls and the whole industry were profitable again. But Duker reneged on the deal. Over the next five years, he and his partner pocketed \$231 million, while the workers received about a third of that, \$84 million.

The Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers, which merged with the Steelworkers in 1997, filed a grievance—and a few weeks before a jury trial was scheduled to begin, Duker agreed to a \$97 million settlement with \$65 million for the union workers and \$32 million to salaried workers.

"There's a great union message here for America," says Terry Smith, head of the Aluminum Workers Trade Council, which represents the 11 local unions involved at Columbia Falls. "People stood up for their rights and won."

"While companies preach the merits of profit sharing, it sometimes takes lawsuits and demonstrations to get them to deliver on their promises," says USWA President George Becker.

SPOTLIGHT

Florida Street Heat Hits the Bulls-Eye

ll eyes were on state lawmakers when more than 2,000 union members and their allies wearing "We're Watching You" buttonsmarched to the Florida statehouse in Tallahassee to lobby their representatives on issues that make up a Working Families Agenda.

The Florida AFL-CIO action was a signal to legislators that working families will hold them accountable-and was instrumental to defeating a Florida "paycheck deception" bill that sought to silence the voice of working families in politics. Several lawmakers who supported the bill withdrew their sponorship as a result of the rally and lobby efforts.

"The defeat of state legislation similar to other 'paycheck protection acts' is a victory for the working people of Florida," says state AFL-CIO President Marilyn P. Lenard. "Even conservative legislators realized it would have silenced the voice of working people and they didn't want that."

The March rally, where activists also spoke out for a living wage, affirmative action, accessible child care, immigrant rights, equal pay and affordable health care, was the state federation's first step in building strong and lasting alliances with community groups such as the NAACP, which cosponsored the rally, the Florida chapter of the National Organization for Women and several environmental groups.

Community outreach is one part of the Florida federation's Street Heat efforts, which also include a series of upcoming rallies across the state to educate and mobilize members.

union information about its health care plan. Talks picked up after the union set an April 8 strike date. Local 27, a HERE affiliate,

represents 40 percent of parking industry employees in metropolitan Washington-and is getting ready to sign up the rest. The mostly immigrant workforce joined Local 27 within the

past year, citing low wages, high health insurance costs and a lack of respect. "We just need a living wage and affordable health insurance so we can care for our

PARK 'N' SIGN

ridlock in the nation's capital

might not be news, but a potential walkout at hundreds

of Washington, D.C., parking

facilities affecting thousands of

commuters got the attention of

ator, which returned to the bar-

gaining table in April after 10 months of stalled negotiations.

the district's largest parking oper-

Parking and Service Workers

Local 27, a HERE affiliate, and

Nashville, Tenn.-based Central

Parking settled a first contract

that provides the 700 parking

attendants with first-ever sick

pocket health care expenses.

company, which runs Diplomat

D.C. area, refused to give the

and other parking facilities in the

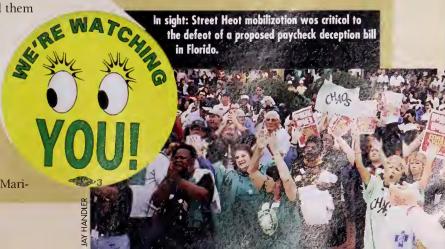
leave and includes fewer out-of-

Negotiations stalled when the

families," says Gebremichael Woldesilasse, a worker originally from Ethiopia.

> Central Parking's net earnings reached \$20 million last year and the company's CEO was listed as one of the richest individuals in the country.

Curb oppeol: Jose Arios, o three-yeor Diplomot Porking employee, was one of 700 Washington, D.C., HERE members who won o first-ever controct with the city's lorgest porking operator.



currents

Making the Connection to High-Tech Jobs

he new contract between the Communications Workers, Electrical Workers and AT&T means better wages for some 52,000 employees—and ensures their role in the future of the telecommunications industry.

The union won several key goals, including a ban on costshifting for retirees and company neutrality in union elections. The neutrality clause opens the way for the unions to begin organizing 12,000 more AT&T

employees and new workers.

"This contract recognizes the high caliber of AT&T's union employees" and gives workers a "fair share in AT&T's success and makes them full partners in AT&T's future," says CWA Presi-



dent Morton Bahr.

The pact "demonstrates that the wisest course for a major corporation in this economy is to forge a partnership with its workers to ensure a strong market position," adds IBEW President John Barry.

The new contract was announced on the same day as the merger of SBC and Ameritech, two of the largest regional Bell companies. Bahr says the merger would help competition in the telecommunications industry. CWA is now in talks with Lucent Technologies, where the contract expired May 30. 🛭

rontier Hotel workers, back at work after a historic six-year strike, recently got more good news: Current and former Frontier employees will recoup \$5 million in back pay and pension funds as a result of National Labor Relations Board decisions supporting unfair labor practice charges filed by HERE against the Las Vegas company.

While most of the award went to the pension fund which Frontier refused to pay into during the strike—some workers received as much as \$100,000 in back pay.

ORGANIZING

AFSCME Psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers at Green Springs Health Services Inc. in Philadelphia voted for AFSCME District Council 47 in April. The 115 workers are the first mental health professionals to organize at a for-profit health care company.

AFT Concerned about patient care being affected by downsizing at Philadelphia's City Avenue Hospital, 319 registered nurses joined the Health Professionals and Allied Employees, an AFT affiliate.

HERE Local 2 won a card check agreement in April with the Four Seasons Hotel at its new San Francisco location, which will employ between 300 and 400 workers when it opens in 2001. In San Diego, 141 workers at the Convention Center Food and Beverage Concourse voted for Local 30 representation.

IBT In May, Local 449 in Buffalo, N.Y., signed up 105 drivers and others at Laidlaw Transit,

Inc. In Aston, Pa., 120 bus drivers, custodians and aides in the Penn Delco School District voted for Local 463, while 100 workers at BFI in St. Louis, Mo., joined Teamsters Local 682.

IFPTE A 400-member unit of equipment specialists and production controllers at the Defense Logistics Agency in Columbus, Ohio, voted for IFPTE Local 7 representation in

LIUNA In May, more than 190 workers voted by a 3-to-1 margin at Union County Hospital in Anna, Ill. More than 1,000 public employees in Shasta County, Calif., voted in April to join the United Public Employees of California, a Laborers affiliate. The Shasta County unit includes social service workers, clerical workers and public health nurses. Workers at the DuQuoin, Ill., General Henry Biscuit cookie plant also cast their votes in April for Laborers representation.

SEIU The 4,500 members of the Public Employees of Riverside County voted to affiliate with

SEIU in May. In San Joaquin County, Calif., 3,100 safety, custodial and others voted for SEIU Local 790. In Madera County, Calif., 150 professionals voted to join Local 535. At Cleveland State University, the school's 330member professional staff signed on with SEIU Local 925. In Newark, N.J., 300 part-time janitors at the Newark, N.J., Housing Authority won voluntary recognition for SEIU Local 617.

UAW The UAW added 340 new members when workers at Walbro Automotive Corp. in Meridian, Conn., voted for the union in April. The win came despite a vicious anti-union campaign by the car parts manufacturer. Other wins include 337 workers at two units of the Blue Care Network, a Blue Shield/Blue-Cross-owned Michigan HMO, who won voluntary recognition after signing authorization cards.

UFCW Workers at a Fred Meyer store in Mount Vernon, Wash., voted for UFCW Local 44 representation in April. The 100 are non-food workers at the large grocery retail outlet.

UNITE In San Benito, Texas, 450 workers signed up with UNITE after a card-signing campaign. In Woburn, Mass., 900 workers at the Marshalls Distribution Center won card-check recognition in April. The organizing campaign began in early April and marks the complete unionization by UNITE at all TJMax and Marshalls Distribution Centers-about 5,000 workers at the recently merged companies' eight locations. Three other big April wins include: 500 workers at Lear Corp., in Winchester, Va.; 350 workers at Tultex in Mayodan, N.C., who join 2,700 other UNITE members at Tultex's Virginia and Massachusetts plants; and 175 workers at Columbus Coated Plastics in St. Louis, Mo.

IAM, UAW and USWA

Unification Organizing Committee reported wins for 790 workers at ABB Transformer in Jefferson City, Mo., 414 workers at Tower Automotive in Granite City, Ill., and 154 workers at three Waste Management sites in the St. Louis, Mo., area.



early 20,000 workers hit it big in Las Vegas—but not at the gambling tables. The workers, members of HERE-affiliated Culinary Workers Local 226 and Bartenders Local 165, ratified a new five-year agreement that raises wages by \$1.55 over the term and prohibits subcontracting.

NUMBERS

The unions' strength-in-numbers tactic was key to winning the new contract, according to Jim Arnold, Local 226 secretary-treasurer. In the past two years, Local 226 has organized more than 6,000 hotel workers citywide in Las Vegas. "Over the last 10 years, we spent 50 percent of our funds on organizing," Arnold says. "We found that is the answer for our future and for bargaining. To get good contracts, we have to keep a level playing field." Which means organizing new facilities as fast as they spring up.

Local 226 and Bartenders Local 165 built

up bargaining clout to negotiate a strong

contract for 20,000 members.

"By now we would have been out of business if we hadn't kept up with the growth in this town," Arnold says.

The contract, the first in a series expected to be signed, covers workers in 70 different job classifications at major hotels and casinos on the strip.

Turned on to Democracy

Turn on, tune in and get involved.

hat 1960s slogan with a 1990s twist set the theme for some 700 labor activists and academicians who held a 1960s-style teach-in on a 1990s issue: democracy and the right to organize.

Dozens of workers, union leaders and professors, including NAACP Chair Julian Bond, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and former Attorney General Ramsay Clark, tackled issues that union activists face daily: political action, cracking the solid South, social

justice and anti-union legislation. Unionists who have participated in campaigns-including organizing efforts among Washington, D.C., parking lot attendants, New York asbestos workers and Avondale Shipyard workers—shared their struggles and successes.

The three-day seminar in Washington, D.C., marked the inauguration of Scholars, Artists and Writers for Social Justice, which supports strengthening the ties between union, academic, creative and cultural communities to foster a vibrant, militant, multicultural labor movement.

OUT FRONT

e can all be very proud of what our union movement accomplished in mounting a unified fight against California's pernicious attempt to silence the voice of working families. The battle to defeat Prop 226 reminds us-and America-of the best of what we are.

We are a movement that can beat seemingly impossible odds when the well-being of working families is at stake. By voting 71-29 percent against this antiworker initiative, union members transformed what looked like a certain loss into a spectacular

What

The

Best of

By John J. Sweeney

victory. The 70 percent support Prop 226 initially enjoyed eroded as we told the truth to union members and all California voters—that Prop 226 was not campaign finance reform or an attempt to protect workers' paychecks, but a thinly camouflaged attack vehicle for the war on working families.

We are a movement in solidarity. Across union lines, we worked together to ensure that working families did not lose further ground on the political playing field to big business and wealthy special interests. We each had unique concerns: Prop 226 would have silenced public employees on privatization, made it harder for construction industry workers to fight prevailing wage threats and tied teachers' hands in fighting voucher proposals, for example. Yet we unified against the common threat to working families' role in America's democracy.

We are a grassroots movement of active, committed union members. This win belongs to each and every union member who went to the polls on June 2. They turned out because union leaders and activists returned to the roots of union action-meeting members one on one. More than 18,000 worksites were visited, 5,005 precincts walked and 650,000 phone calls logged. The result: On June 2, working people throughout the state joined together to say, "We will not be silenced!"

This was a critical win. Had Prop 226 passed, Paycheck Deception bills on Capitol Hill would have gained new momentum, as would similar measures pending in other states. It was important for other reasons as well. This fight has helped our movement build new systems for communication and involvement. It is a model for effective political work this fall in every state. And it cultivated 24,000 new political activists in California alone to get a jumpstart on upcoming political action.

We still have plenty of work to do to halt attempts in other states and Congress to silence our members. And we'll do it. But we'll also take some important lessons from the Prop 226 fight with us into other political efforts: When we educate our members, it works. When we confront deception with truth, it works. When we act in solidarity, it works.

To every California union member who voted, to every union staff member and volunteer who played a role in this battle, America's working families owe a great deal of thanks.

By James B. Parks Unions are heeding the call

By James B. Parks

The state of the state of

he Southern California-Nevada Regional Carpenters added 2,000 new members in the past 18 months. Last year, AFSCME District Council 31 won 29 of 30 elections covering 2,000 workers in Illinois. UNITE's southern region signed up 2,500 new members. SEIU Local 113 in Minneapolis–St. Paul gained 1,500 new members in 1997.

How did they do it? For unions to expand, they must organize—and successful organizing requires big changes in how unions go about gaining new members. Each of the four local unions sought to create a "culture of organizing" and commit to changes in budget, staffing and planning to win more members.

Unions are heeding the call from the AFL-CIO's Changing to Organize program, whose goal is to move a third of resources into organizing.

Today, more than 100 local unions dedicate 10 to 20 percent of their resources to organizing, and the same number have increased organizing budgets. Here's how they are making it happen



Organizers at these locals say every union local must take specific steps to organize successfully. First, union leaders must make a conscious commitment to organize. Once that decision is made, the local union then begins to:

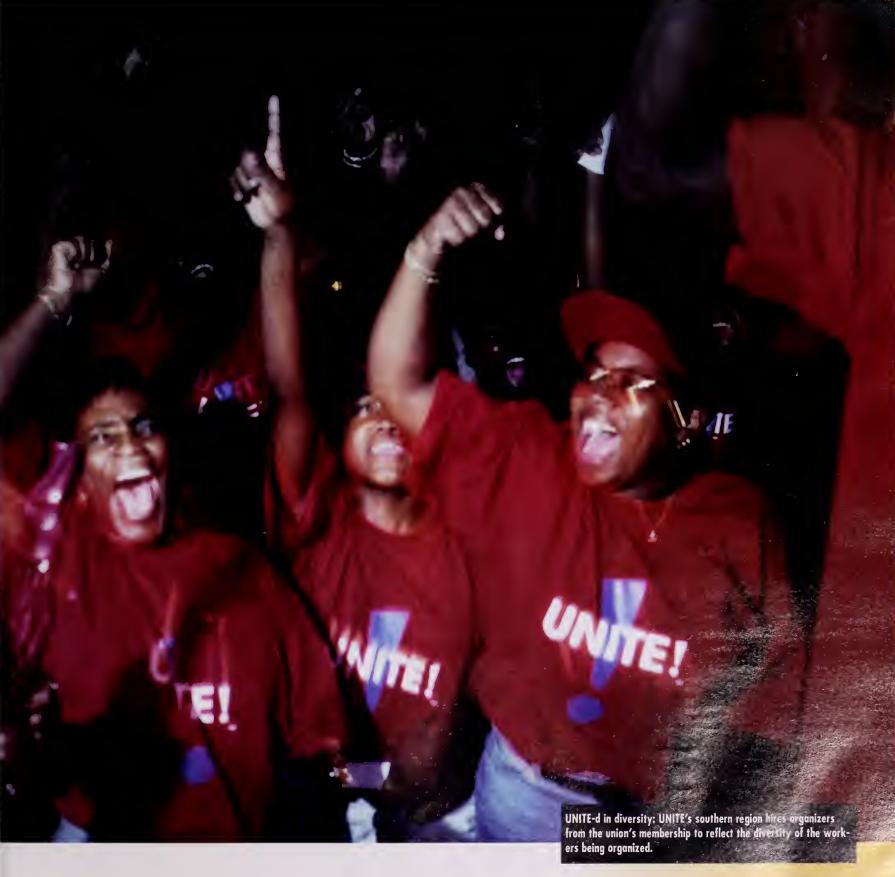
- Shift resources to organizing.
- Hire good organizers.

- Develop a winning plan.
- Involve the members.

Creating an atmosphere for organizing

There is no easy way to convince a local union to change the way it does things, says Dave

Foster, director of Steelworkers District 11. He believes that persistence works, and that leadership must raise the issue at every opportunity: "You have to keep saying over and over that a growing movement is able to do things that a declining one can't," he says. "Eventually, that creates an atmosphere for organizing."



The message that seems to resonate with most members is that unions gain more political and economic clout with each new member. "We organize to protect and negotiate better contracts," says Marc Furman of the Carpenters Southern

beg for them."

California-Nevada Regional Council.

"We want to dictate working conditions, not

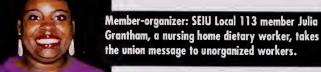
In 1997, eight international unions met a goal set by the AFL-CIO to increase membership by 3 percent each year: Professional and Technical Engineers, School Administrators, Air Line Pilots, Flight Attendants, AFT, Machinists, Writers Guild and Longshoremen. Three percent membership growth is the minimum needed to maintain overall union membership density levels.

About 18 months ago, the staff at SEIU Local 113 sat down to talk about organizing. Although it is a large local with 11,000 members working in health care throughout Minnesota, the union never really had focused on organizing.

"We had a small organizing staff and we went out if we got a call," says Jeff Farmer, Local 113 special projects director. "We had no strategic focus." Spurred by the international unions call inviting locals to devote 10 percent of their resources to organizing in 1996, and to increase that to 15 percent in 1997 and 20 percent in 1998, Local 113 started to think about ways to build membership. "We began to ask, what could we do if we had 10 organizers?""

What the local did was begin to organize an entire sector of the health care community that

Shifting resources: Re-channeling resources to organizing has enabled the Southern California-Nevada Regional Carpenters to add 2,000 new members in the past 18 months.



was barely unionized—nursing homes in the Twin Cities area. "We were surprised when we started looking at it, that there were literally

thousands of nursing home workers unorganized," Farmer says.

Organizing the nursing homes was not only the right thing to do, Farmer says, but the smart thing. The union already represented workers in other health care professions who shared the same concerns as the nursing home employees.

Local 113's leadership was the driving force behind the new sense of urgency. Headed at that time by SEIU Secretary-Treasurer Betty Bednarczyk, local leaders set the tone, established priorities and made the necessary structural changes.

STEP 1

SHIFTING RESOURCES TO ORGANIZING

Once a local union makes a decision to organize, leadership must commit resources and make structural changes needed to reach the goal. SEIU Local 113 changed the role of shop stewards and dramatically increased their power by training them to investigate and file grievances—typically a union staff function—freeing up staff to take part in organizing. In the South, UNITE locals decided to shift from a district to a regional structure, enabling districts with more resources to share staffing and funding when money was needed for organizing.

Today, about 150 local unions dedicate 10 to

Where the Action Is

Here's a sample from 1997 of how some unions are changing to organize:

- Flight Attendants dedicate \$1 million for organizing.
- OPEIU organizes 10,000 new members in 1997.
- IUE channels 30 percent of its budget to organizing.
- Two of every three SEIU locals spend 20 percent of their budgets on organizing.
- •Thirteen AFSCME councils are changing to organize.
- Carpenters spend 50 percent on organizing.
- UFCW organized 104,000 new members in 1997.
- Teamsters organizes largest number in a decade.
- Machinists had second largest oneyear membership growth in union history.
- Air Line Pilots registered 10 percent membership growth.
- Amalgamated Transit Union tripled organizing activity from 1996-1997.
- CWA organized 9,200 USAirways workers through a national multi-site campaign.
- AFT organized 9,500 Dallas Independent School District Employees.
- Unions are taking part in cooperative campaigns in St. Louis (UAW-IAM-USWA); New Orleans (Operating Engineers, HERE, SEIU); Las Vegas (15 Building Trades Unions); and Maryland (AFSCME, AFT, IBT).
- Entire sectors or industries are being organized, including steel, called "SWOC II" (USWA); strawberry industry (Farm Workers); SBC Corp. (CWA); Washington, D.C., parking attendants (HERE); and New York City asbestos workers (LIUNA).



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CARPENTERS

20 percent of their resources to organizing, and an equal number have increased their organizing budgets. The AFL-CIO's Changing to Organize program has set a goal to move a third of resources into organizing.

STEP 2

HIRING GOOD ORGANIZERS

The power behind any organizing campaign is fueled not only by resources but by the people involved. "If you're convinced it is absolutely essential to the labor movement to organize, you'll find the resources," says Henry Bayer, director of AFSCME District 31. "We don't want to be pall bearers for the labor movement." AFSCME District Council 31 started out with a handful of organizers, but as membership increased—it now represents 75,000 workers—the number of organizers has grown to 14.

At USWA District 11, more than 50 percent of its staff are organizers. SEIU Local 113 hired 10 organizers and committed 15 percent of its budget to organizing. The Nevada Carpenters reduced servicing staff and raised the number of organizers from zero to nine. Shop stewards were trained to handle servicing. And at the UAW, for every new organizer hired by an Auto Workers local, the international provides another.

A new organizing staff also should reflect the diversity of the workers being organized. When SEIU Local 113 decided to organize nursing homes, it recruited organizers from community groups, political campaigns, members of the local and nursing home employees. It is easier to establish an initial link of trust if workers see someone like them—and who has worked in similar jobs, organizers say.

In Nevada, the Carpenters hired a bilingual staff to organize the mostly Latino workers and publish a newsletter in Spanish. UNITE's southern region hired women and African Americans. "We recruit a lot of our organizers from the union's rank-and-file," says Harris Raynor, assistant director of UNITE's southern region.

STEP 3

DEVELOPING A WINNING PLAN

Once a mission is set, and an organizing team is in place, it's time to research the employer and pinpoint the advantages that could help in organizing a campaign.

The more local unions know about a company—its finances, workforce composition, ownership and key business relationships with banks or other institutions—the better the odds of winning a campaign. Much of this information is available in public records and on the Internet.

Another key piece of research is whether a



local represents workers who have some relationship with the company or one of its business partners. When AFSCME District 31 organized prison doctors and nurses whose jobs had been privatized, some of the contractors vigorously resisted the union. AFSCME, which represents most other state prison workers, asked state corrections department officials to persuade the private contractors not to fight the organizing drive. The officials agreed, and the contractors dropped their anti-union campaign.

STEP 4

INVOLVING MEMBERS IN ORGANIZING

Member-organizers are a key component of winning campaigns. Many unions recruit member volunteers to assist staff organizers. Others pay members lost-time wages to work as organizers. However it's done, involving local members is critical to the success of a campaign. Workers respond well to other workers, especially those in the same industry. Making union members a part of campaigns also gives them a sense of ownership. "If organizing is the secret project of the international, then you're going to fail," Foster says. "When the members get involved, they share in the dreams and the wins. Your local members become the most outspoken and effective advocates for the union."

Some of the best member-organizers are energetic activists who relate well to people and have evenings and weekends free for training and organizing.

Julia Grantham, a SEIU Local 113 memberorganizer, first learned about the union movement when she was nine years old. Her parents, both UAW members, told her that a strike loomed and she might not be able to get the bicycle they promised for her birthday. "At first I was upset. But when my dad explained why they had to go on strike—for a good contract, better wages—I understood."

Today, the nursing home dietary worker takes the union message to unorganized workers. "When I hear their issues and see the hopelessness in their eyes—and I know what they can have—that's why I organize," Grantham explains.

Taken together, these techniques will not guarantee a win, but will make success more likely. Creating an organizing local takes a committed leadership, serious planning and effective execution. Organizing is the key to union strength—and to our future. As Dave Foster says, "Organizing is the fulcrum of the entire labor movement. Either we do it or we fail."

Making the Change to Organize

Tips and advice on tactics from unions that are running successful campaigns and winning first contracts are in the AFL-CIO's Organizing That Works: Tips For Union Leaders, which is available (62 cents each) from the AFL-CIO Support Services Department at 202-639-5041.

The AFL-CIO also is sponsoring several meetings on organizing for elected leaders. Principal elected union officers of locals and regions who are nominated by their internationals will meet in Chicago June 3–5 and September 9–11 for candid, in-depth discussions about creating successful organizing programs.

A reunion of participants in previous Elected Leaders Task Force meetings will be Sept. 23–25 in Chicago.

One-day regional meetings on organizing also are planned for principal elected officials of locals and regions.

For information, call the AFL-CIO Organizing Dept., 202-639-6200.



Bringing Home
Child Labor:
What It Takes to

Make
the Products We
BUV

BY DAVID KAMERAS

hat sweater on the display table sure looks appealing. You're shopping in one of those temples of American retailing—Sears, JC Penney, Kmart. You know by the designer name on the label that you're creating American jobs even as you purchase the latest fashion.

Think again. Chances are, that garment was made in a sweatshop abroad. And even worse, it probably was made by children—toiling in some of the most neglected corners of the world, out of the sight and consciousness of most Americans.



'My master beat me brutally, charred my hand in the flames of a gas stove and then branded me with red-hot iron rod.'

— Ashraf Ali, age 7, domestic servant in India

The International Labor Organization estimates that 250 million children—some human rights activists say the total figure is closer to 400 million—work worldwide. Nearly half of these children, some as young as five, labor full time—and at least one-third perform dangerous work.

It's hard to explain to American children that the toys they crave carry the pain of children their age who make them—and who never could afford them. Children such as Pattinathar, a bidi (cigarette) maker in South India, who the ILO reports was six years old when he began work, 16 hours a day, six days a week—for \$1.30 a week. After six weeks' labor, Pattinathar's earnings equal the price of one "Beanie Baby" toy.

Ground zero

In 1997, the Apparel Industry Partnership, made up of labor, consumer, human rights and religious groups, created a voluntary workplace code of conduct that includes a prohibition against employment of children younger than 15.

But to be effective, the partnership requires the involvement and cooperation of more than the manufacturers concerned enough to serve on the panel. "Our real measure of progress must be in the changed and improved lives and livelihoods of apparel workers at home and around the world," President Bill Clinton said at the founding of the partnership. "That is why we need more companies to join this crusade and follow its strict rules of conduct."

Many of the tangible breakthroughs to eliminate child labor are happening where the children live—and some of the most effective efforts are taking place through the Solidarity Center, which seeks union-based solutions to child exploitation.

The staff of the Solidarity Center provides hands-on training for workers around the globe, enabling them to build unions and challenge repression and injustice from the exploitation of multinational corporations and corrupt governments by building unions and assisting progressive development. Launched in 1997, the Solidarity Center is funded jointly by the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy.

"As staff members of the Solidarity Center, we spend most of our time getting to know the workings and problems facing unions, and then use our resources to train and motivate union leaders and members to build their unions into dynamic worker groups," says Dan



Educational: UNITE Vice President Clayola Brown (center) and AFL-CIO International Affairs Director Barbara Shailar (left) visited a Bangladesh school far former child laborers as part of a trip examining sweatshops in Bangladesh and Thailand last spring.

O'Laughlin, a regional representative in Africa.

The conditions of working children contradict a cornerstone argument of free trade: that unregulated trade boosts jobs and living standards for everyone.

Ashraf Ali, hired out as a domestic servant, was so ill-fed that the hungry seven-year-old Indian child took a few leftover drops of milk

from his employer. The result: "My master beat me brutally, charred my hand in the flames of a gas stove and then branded me with red-hot iron rod."

Yet many CEOs believe that sweatshop labor is providing workers with "opportunities"; Nike chief Phil Knight calls his company "a civilizing force in undeveloped nations."

"It sounds like a low wage, and it is," Knight told the San Francisco Examiner, describing workers' salaries in Vietnam and Indonesia. "But it's a wage that's greater than they used to make." The minimum

wage in Vietnam is \$1.60 a day—not enough to buy three meals.

"People are always talking about human rights and welfare," says Allen Lee, manager of a Nike plant in China. "In 1989, people never did that. That was my golden time—no one squeezed me."

These same corporations often say poverty can be reduced when poor families send their children to work. Beyond the moral argument that children should not be used as free-market slaves, the economic result of child labor is a perpetuation of the poverty cycle. Child labor displaces adults from jobs, drives down wages and deprives children of an education, sentencing them and their offspring to lives restricted by a lack of skills.

Nazma Akhter, a former child garment worker, literally put her life on the line to improve the conditions in a Bangladeshi garment factory. When she was 14, Akhter organized a demonstration and hunger strike to "force the owners to pay the minimum wage and provide the basic facilities required by law."

"Our demonstration was broken up by the police, who used tear gas, and I was severely beaten by goons hired by the owners," Akhter says. The factory, which ships 60 percent of its goods to the United States, shut down—only to reopen when it hired new workers. "After this experience," Akhter continues, "I decided to dedicate my life to making conditions better for the workers in the garment industry." Akhter is now a staff member of the Bangladesh Independent Garment-Workers Federation (BIGUF), founded in the early 1990s by a group of women who continued organizing the independent union despite a brutal attack on their headquarters and threats on their lives. Today, BIGUF, which won its political and legal battle for official government recognition in 1997, represents 30,000 garment workers. BIGUF and the Solidarity Center jointly run schools for former child workers (see Bangladesh, page 16).

Key to the Solidarity Center's work is setting up programs such as the schools in Bangladesh that provide children in the labor force with an



Setting up schools: The Solidarity Center and the independent Bangladesh Garment-Workers Federation union jointly run schools for former child laborers.

alternative to exploitation, and building or revitalizing trade unions to

create a sustainable means for workers to fight for improved working conditions.

"Not having access to regular schools, children are forced to join the ranks of the labor force as unskilled workers, mostly in the unorganized sector," says Shantha Sinha of the M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation, a charitable group in India.

"It is unfortunate that there is still a debate among educationists and policy makers on the need for the children of the poor to be sent to schools."

What You Can Do to End Child Labor

To involve your members in the struggle to end child labor:

- Urge your legislators to ratify and enforce laws against child labor and support education of all children. Tell law-makers to ratify and enforce the international conventions on human and worker rights, and to link trade and investment to fundamental human and worker rights.
- Involve your union, congregation, neighbors and co-workers in your efforts to protect children.
- Insist that the products you buy are free of child labor. Ask companies you buy from whether they are doing their part. Tell companies that employ children to replace them with adult family members and ensure that the children are rehabilitated and educated.
- Help workers organize into unions to improve their lives. Where workers have the right to organize, child labor is uncommon. Workers who know their rights are equipped to prevent exploitation.

For more information, check out the following web sites: Union Label and Service Trades, unionlabel.org and Free the Children, freethechildren.org.

ndones

Islands of Cheap Child Labor

The economic depression now sweeping the Pacific Rim landed some of its hardest blows on Indonesia. But when they hit, an estimated 9 million Indonesian children already were being exploited in child labor. Now, as western powers seek a way out for the world's fourth most populous nation, the country's most fragile links—the children—

are likely to bear the brunt of any economic reform.

"What we are likely to see out of this economic crisis is more child labor," says Timothy Ryan, Solidarity Center representative in Jakarta. Under International Monetary Fund proposals, fuel subsidies for gasoline and diesel will vanish, causing food prices to skyrocket. "At that point, based on the people that I've met—when I look at their paychecks and see what kind of income they have—they are not going to be able to send their kids to school. The transport costs are going to be too high, the school fees are going to be too high.

"So what does that do? That puts more kids out on the street and will probably lead to more child labor."

Nike, Reebok, Levi's, Tommy Hilfiger, GAP, Guess, Liz Claiborne. These familiar brand names and more dominate the export trade in Indonesia, where independent trade unions are illegal. But 60 nongovernmental organizations are working to end child labor in North Sumatra fisheries, East Java factories and in every big city, where street children abound.

With a centralized trade union structure, most Indonesian unions are little more than government mouthpieces. But the current economic crisis has resulted in cracks in the system, providing an opportunity for the Solidarity Center to work with democratic union forces as they emerge with new power. And the spotlight aimed at the dark



recesses of the sweatshops also has had some impact.

"Up until recently, you could find children working for garment manufacturers," Ryan says. "But generally, the attention has been focused on these companies, so you don't find it there. You find it a lot in agribusiness, in shrimp and fish production."

Ryan was a journalist, freelance writer and unionist at the University of Washington before signing on with the Solidarity Center.

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unions are
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overnment
mouthpieces.

But writing about social and political issues wasn't enough.

"I wanted to combine my writing, my social activism and international experience; the international labor movement is for me the best way to do it.

"The patience and persistence of the Indonesians I know working for improvement of the

labor conditions here are inspiring and thought-provoking," Ryan says. "Coming from a country like the United States, where freedom and instant everything—gratification, communication, expectations—is taken for granted, it's a sobering lesson to see people working long and hard and through terrible difficulties to achieve what they believe is important in the long run."

By the millions: Nine million children are at work in Indone-

The Lucky Children
Live on the Streets

In Nairobi, an estimated 30,000 children live on the streets. These children, as young as six years old, consider themselves lucky: lucky

because they're not working on tea or coffee plantations or laboring in the mines, quarries and chemical plants where conditions are even worse than in the fields.

Under Kenyan law, children are covered by child labor laws until they're 12. But in reality, they are an "invisible" workforce, says the Solidarity Center's Daniel O'Laughlin.

"It is unheard of to have a prosecution for child labor in Kenya. Nobody sees it—not the employer, government officials or even the families," he says. "Government officials, including labor inspectors, are part of the system. That is part of the invisible nature of the situation."

The Solidarity Center is one of nearly 100 nongovernmental organizations working in Kenya. But limited funding and needs that extend beyond child labor—drought relief, medical care, agricultural development—mean that no more than a handful of children receive the financial support they need to attend school.

O'Laughlin first teamed up with American unionists back in 1967 when he was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ghana. "I was promoting credit unions and they were building trade unions," he recalls. "Both were aimed at improving the lives of ordinary workers through democratically operated and owned organizations." Now, much of his time is spent encouraging young men and women workers to become more active in their unions.

"A real tragedy of child labor is that if children don't die on the streets, they are likely to die in prison for crimes committed when they are no longer street children." An estimated 90 percent of the street children in just one of the city's suburbs already have

damaged their brains and livers through the constant use of drugs and glue.

O'Laughlin and other workers in western Africa remain inspired by the few successes. For instance, six years ago, the African-American Labor Center provided funding, through the Central Organization of Trade Unions and the Plantation Workers Union, to help tea pickers outside Nairobi set up adult literacy classes. Some participants created a revolving fund that eventually helped put some of the children in schools.

But these stories, O'Laughlin says, are the exception.

These **Statistics**Speak for Themselves

Bangladesh

6.1 million children were at work in 1995–1996, with kids as young as 13 laboring in garment factories, brick fields, shrimp processing plants and soap factories.

Colombia

Nearly 28 percent of Bogota's prostitutes are between the ages of 10 and 14; 5 percent are between nine and 10 years old. In 1992, the total estimate of children working was 2.5 million.

India

The Indian government estimates that 90 million out of 179 million children ages 6 to 14 are working; unofficial estimates exceed 100 million. Children work making carpets, cigarettes, brassware, jewelry, embroidery and sporting goods. At least 15 million are bonded laborers—essentially slaves, working off debts usually incurred by their parents or other relatives.

Sri Lanka

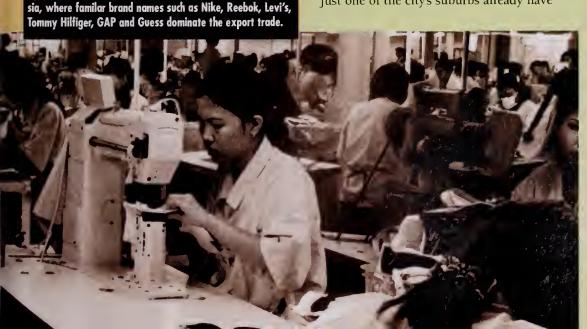
Starting at an average age of 12, between 1 million and 2 million children younger than 18 are at work, primarily in industries not covered by labor law: domestic service, agriculture, vehicle repair, public markets and prostitution.

Nepal

More than 1 million children work in agriculture, services, industry and construction. Seventy-one percent of the total population lives in poverty.

Nigeria

Between 15 million and 20 million children—some of them as young as six—work in farming, fishing, domestic service and light industry, or are employed by multinational corporations involved in waste recycling and agriculture.





Eight Years Old and Breaking Bricks

When a mother of two recently sent a letter to Bangladesh Solidarity Center Country Director Greg Schulze describing how she had to pull her children, ages 8 and 10, out of school so they could help her break bricks and support the family, it was a sadly familiar story. "We came up with a stipend for one of the children, so at least one was still in school," says Schulze. "These stories happen every day. It's pretty rough."

The school for former child workers is one of three the Solidarity Center opened jointly with the Bangladesh Independent Garment-Workers Federation (BIGUF) in 1995. More than 180 children currently receive free. non-formal primary education, books, supplies and meals, as well as basic health screening and medication. Eventually, program administrators hope to expand its benefits to children of sweatshop workers and kids working in other sectors, and to expand its offerings into vocational and further formal education.

For many families, sending children into the workforce means the difference between survival and starvation; for kids to stay in school, parents must be provided with alternative financial support. With its limited resources, the Solidarity Center provides funding alternatives whenever possible. But as long as there is demand abroad for goods produced by children, the demand for child labor will continue.

"Everybody buys from Bangladesh," Schulze says. "They do not have their own shops set up there, it's all contracted. But everybody, from Kmart, Sears, Wal-Mart, buys from them."

Although Bangladesh has a child labor law on the books—employers are prohibited from hiring children under 14-as in many countries where legislation can be produced for human rights agencies, practice supercedes law: Bangladesh does not issue birth certificates, making it easy for employers to hire children of any age.

In 1995, the ILO, the Bangladesh Manufacturers Export Employers Association and UNICEF agreed on a plan to get Bangladeshi

children out of the factories. They estimated then that 40 percent of the workers were children; they now claim that figure is down to less than 10 percent. But local unionists say the real number is closer to 18 percent.

The size and international visibility of "formal sector" industries such as garment manufacturing often make it easier to win worker rights, Schulze says. More difficult to identify and organize are children working in the "informal sector": kids who work in the streets, as house-servants-and those who break bricks.

"You have to fight the hopelessness of thinking that you are just flicking water on a volcano," he says. "It is massive. It is truly, truly poverty and the ramifications of poverty—birth defects, malnutrition, disease, unsafe drinking water, no places to sleep." But he adds: "You can't be a pessimist there. You have got to be an optimist."

A Glimmer of **Hope**

The Global March Against Child Labor, which began in the Philippines in March, traveled to the United States in May, and arrived in June at United Nations headquarters in Geneva, brought home the widespread exploitation of the world's children. Hundreds of organizations in 98 countries took part in the event, organized by the International Labor Organization. While child labor is a serious problem abroad, less known is how extensive child labor is in the United States, where labor economist Douglas Kruse found that 290,000 kids were employed unlawfully in 1996. Of those children, 59,600 were younger than 14 and 13,100 worked in garment sweatshops.

The Global March sparked optimism at every step of its global route—but also highlighted the challenges still ahead. As the march wound through Indonesia in February, 35 child laborers and four adult workers—on their way to a discussion on the child labor issue with Indonesia's minister for manpower-were arrested in Jakarta. They were later released.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) have introduced legislation that would establish a voluntary label certifying that products have not been made with child labor, while imposing tough penalties if used fraudulently. "A product label is a critical weapon in the fight against domestic and international child labor exploitation," Miller says. "Used honestly and consistently, it can help children, businesses and consumers.'

Thabo Simon Mokoena, the march's national coordinator for South Africa, says that the Global March involved "thousands of feet, representative of marchers coming together for eradication of child labor in Africa."

"These also signify the millions of unemployed adults who will march into employment and reduce poverty, the root cause of most of our social ills. We are starting to move towards a better lot for our children."

Round the world: The Global March Against Child Labor traveled to the United States in May, bringing home the wide-spread exploitation of the world's children.

LUCIA HODGKINS

Kill Unions and **Cozy Up to Business**

It's hard to miss the presence of multinationals in Thailand. And Philip Robertson, Solidarity Center representative, knows why: Thailand is a prime example of the link between the absence of labor rights and the exploitation of workers, young and old.

"Any time someone is trying to organize a plant and the employer finds out, that person is fired," Robertson says. "What you have is a situation where labor laws are not

enforced and the labor law that does exist is quite weak." In fact, Robertson says, the government "has set up a real systematic decimation" of unions—a situation the Solidarity Center, working closely with Thailand's textile federation, is trying to change.

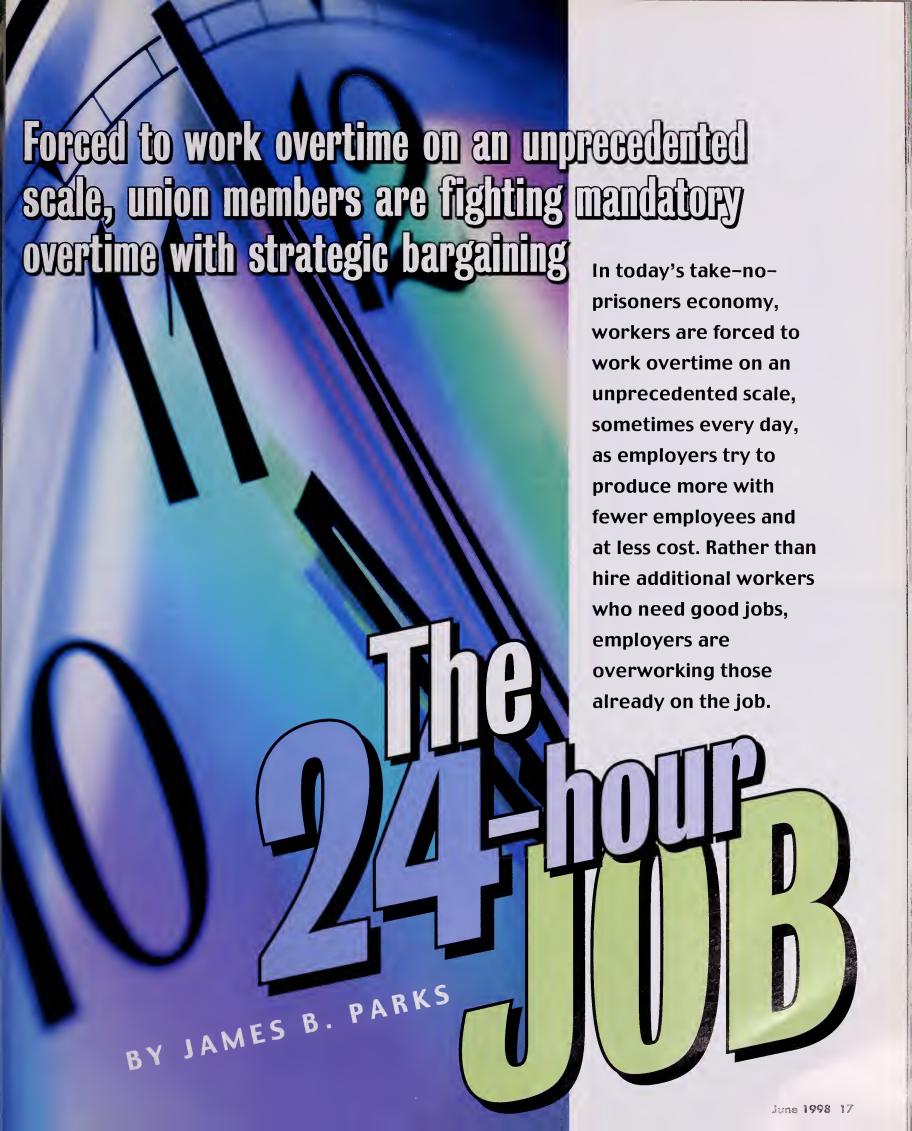
"The government set up a friendly investment scheme—a very pro-business kind of environment." Corruption and ties between government and business elites compound the problem, he adds.

More than half of the country's government-inspected child labor is located in Bangkok and its suburbs, where kids make garments, shoes, fishing nets and jewelry, pump gas, cut gems, or sell on the street often selling themselves. The government estimates there are 13,000 child prostitutes in Thailand; nongovernmental organizations say the figure is more like 800,000. Frequently, children are ushered into the flesh trade by their parents, who sign a debt bondage agreement with brokers.

"Children are sold into prostitution, sometimes with the knowledge of their parents," Robertson says. In that and other

> trades, subcontractors often approach parents, especially migrant workers, who are desperate to make ends meet.





hese profit-squeezing tactics can devastate a community, says labor researcher Tom Juravich. "You have a two-tier work situation: You either don't work or you work too much. Currently, the average worker puts in a full day more each month than our parents did."

Forced overtime not only affects workers who are fatigued, stressed and even ill from overwork. Families also pay a price: They no longer have a parent or spouse who has time to eat dinner at home or attend school plays. It puts a strain on family relationships, even ruining marriages. "I've seen grown men stand up and cry at union meetings," says Rob Hermann, a member of Teamsters Local 1149 in Baldwinsville, N.Y., a suburb of Syracuse. "They thought that when they got a job at Anheuser-Busch, they had landed somewhere that would be good for them and their families." Instead their families have left them because they were forced to put in so much overtime.

Linda Barajas, a member of Steelworkers Local

326 in Pueblo, Colo., knows how hard it is when you can't spend time with your family because you never know when you'll have to work overtime. The 44-year-old single mother of two regularly works 12-hour daily shifts at CF&I Steel, then another 24 hours straight on weekends. "You try to fit a life in there and be responsible to your family. The only time I could count on being off was vacation. My last vacation was in August and I didn't have even one day off until October."

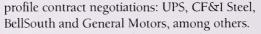
Workers at the Baldwinsville Anheuser-Busch plant know what that's like. They work on dayto-day schedules. They are told at lunchtime if they have to work overtime that day. "You can't go to weddings, to dinner with your family. After a while, it takes a toll," Hermann says.

These are not isolated cases. Forced overtime is becoming as much a part of today's workplace as lunch breaks, and is a major issue in some high-

Working overtime is part of a "systematic, conscious trends among companies to cut costs by going to a smaller workforce, often smaller than is needed to do the work.

—Tom Juravich, director, University of

Massachusetts Labor Relations and Research Center



Ironically, at a time of growing public and government awareness of sweatshops and their long hours and low pay, there is little response to the problems of forced overtime in higher paying jobs. Another irony is how the trend toward forced overtime "coincides" with increasing moves to hire part-timers and subcontractors. But unions are developing effective bargaining strategies to counteract this trend.

Round-the-clock work

Working overtime is part of a "systematic, conscious trend" among companies to cut costs by going to a smaller workforce, often smaller than is needed to do the work, says Juravich, who is



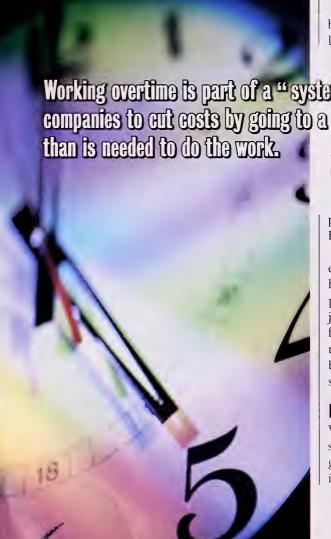
Timed: BellSouth conveniently lifted the company ban on workers putting in more than 12 overtime hours per week, forcing them to work six-day shifts, after call volumes rose.

director of the Labor Relations and Research Center at the University of Massachusetts. The nature of overtime has changed over the years. In the 1960s and 1970s, when jobs were secure and wages high, workers, especially younger ones, put in overtime as a way of earning extra money.

Today, companies boast of being able to run production or provide services "24-7"—early mornings, evenings, nights and weekends are seamless phases of a never-ending business cycle. Rather than hire more workers, Juravich says, employers push current workers to work longer to keep up productivity, often without regard to the impact on the employees' lives.

Many employers claim they are using more overtime because additional workers are not available to be hired. But that's simply not true. Even today, with unemployment at a 25-year low, there are still plenty of people who want and need jobs. In fact, overtime means bigger profits for employers because they can lower the cost of health care, vacations, pensions and other benefits by spreading them over a larger number of hours worked. If unions had not defeated last year's attempt by Congress to pass the so-called "comp time" bill, the already meager legal protections against overtime abuse would have been weakened further.

Many companies are taking advantage of the current economic boom to push up profits by lowering personnel costs—getting rid of jobs and forcing the remaining workers to maintain productivity, Juravich says. After a company is downsized, the remaining workers not only have to work longer to keep up productivity; if they refuse overtime, they may lose their jobs, Juravich adds. BellSouth cut 900 service representative jobs in nine states. When call volumes



"My members want to do nothing but give the public great service, but there is only so much they can do. They're forced to work until they drop."

-Don LaRotonda, president, CWA Local 3104, Broward County, Fla.

went up, the remaining reps regularly were forced to work six-day shifts, after the company conveniently lifted its ban on workers putting in more than 12 overtime hours per week. Some workers became ill and others suffered mental or nervous stress disorders, says Noah Savant, assistant to the vice president of CWA District 3.

BellSouth's quality of service began to suffer as well—a common result of forced overtime. The Florida Public Service Commission recently cited BellSouth for failing to meet minimum state quality standards for two of the past three years. The commission said the telecommunications company was not installing new phone lines within three days or repairing phone service within 24 hours, as required by the state.

That didn't surprise Don LaRotonda, president of CWA Local 3104 in Broward County, Fla. "My members want to do nothing but give the public great service, but there is only so much they can do. They're forced to work until they drop."

Organizing solution

Unions must organize and grow so that there is an increased union presence on the shop floor—and in the industry, Juravich says. In a sector such as the automobile industry, where the majority

of workers are organized, employers can't undercut wages. Organizing enables unions to protect and negotiate better contracts and dictate working conditions, rather than depend on the mercy of the employer.

Forced overtime also has changed the way employers bargain, Juravich says. Company negotiators threaten unions by claiming the company will have to let workers go and increase forced overtime as a way of blackmailing unions to accept concessions.

Unions need to develop more sophisticated contract language that discourages employers from mandating overtime, Juravich says.

Forced overtime can be a key organizing strategy, adds Juravich, who, with labor researcher

Kate Bronfenbrenner, is the author of "It Takes More Than House Calls: Organizing to Win With a Comprehensive Union-Building Strategy." The article is part of the recently published book *Organizing to Win*. Workers angry about forced overtime and its effect on their lives recognize the need for union representation in the face of bosses' demands for more work with fewer

Past time: Workers at some Anheuser-Busch plants work on day-to-day schedules and are told at lunchtime if they have to work overtime that day.



WER &

U.S. workers are the most productive—and the most overworked—in the world, according to the Conference Board, a public policy organization. The number of hours U.S. workers put in, whether by holding down two or three jobs or through forced overtime, sets us apart not only from our counterparts in other industrialized countries, but from this nation's CEOs, whose skyrocketing profits are at the expense of working families just trying to make ends meet.

• The average U.S. worker works a full

day a month more than his or her parents

- For every 100 hours worked by a U.S. employee in 1995, a worker in the United Kingdom worked 93 hours; in Sweden, 83 hours; in France, 81 hours; and in West Germany, 76 hours.
- Most European workers receive at least four weeks vacation; U.S. workers typically receive two
- Parents spend 40 percent less time with their children than they did a generation ago.
- The number of workers holding down two or more jobs increased from 4.9 percent in 1979 to 6.2 percent in 1989, with the most rapid increase among women.

Source: Economic Policy Institute, State of Working America 1996-1997



employees. Unions should promote the 40-hour week as a union achievement and vigorously fight for new rules limiting overtime, Juravich says.

Bargaining for time

At the bargaining table, unions tackle forced overtime by seeking to limit the amount of involuntary hours workers put in, remove the incentives for forced overtime and increase the number of employees.

"Our people are just tired of it," says Noah Savant. Which is why forced overtime is a key CWA issue in contract talks covering 45,000 BellSouth employees. Contract talks began in June. CWAs proposals covering forced overtime in BellSouth negotiations illustrate strategies that have been used successfully by other unions:

- Demand that the company hire more workers. BellSouth already has added back 300 service representatives and is trying to fill 1,100 other vacancies.
- Ask for volunteers to work more than 12 hours overtime per week. Voluntary overtime creates better morale, and workers are more productive when they choose to work instead of being forced, Savant says.
- Strengthen overtime provisions to prevent abuse of the system.

Negotiating strategies also can address forced overtime through a wide range of workplace



Time out: Workers at CF&I Steel in Pueblo, Colo., have been on strike since October over issues that include forced overtime.

which has spawned numerous strikes at General Motors plants. As a result, Auto Workers negotiated an agreement that allows workers like Rick Caudillo of UAW Local 22 to spend time with his family and work overtime if he chooses.

"Under our contract, we have four different options of times to work," Caudillo says. "We can work just Monday to Friday or we can work Monday to Friday and 12 hours on Saturday. Or we can work 12 hours Saturday and 12 on Sunday or seven hours Saturday and seven on Sunday. So I have the flexibility to pick what schedules I need."

The trend toward forced overtime can be stemmed only by strong unions both on the shop floor and at the bargaining table, Juravich points out. Unions are heeding the concerns of workers like Barajas, Rodriguez, Hermann and

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Unfair Labor Practices

Caudillo who work hard, but need options. "You get burned out," says Walter Borowy, an Anheuser-Busch worker in St. Louis, who puts in 16 hours of overtime each week. "We just want the right to say 'no."

issues, such as health and safety.

For example, the Steelworkers bargain contract language that adds safety and health rules to limit overtime for workers who operate dangerous machinery. "There is an overall concern about the hazards raised" when an equipment operator is too tired from working long hours to be alert, says Roy Murray, USWA's collective bargaining director.

Another tactic is to limit the overall amount of overtime put in by all employees over a given time. When Inland Steel laid off 3,000 workers, USWA negotiated an agreement with the company that Inland would recall one laid-off employee whenever total overtime reached 520 hours in one quarter. The union calculated how many hours one full-time worker put in during a quarter and made that the yardstick, Murray says.

Another innovative idea is to make the employer pay whenever workers exceed overtime limits. USWA established an Institute for Career Development to train workers and work to see that employer participation is part of the contract. The institute oversees an overtime control training fund in which 14 companies pay \$5 per hour for every hour worked by any employee over 56 hours a week. "This takes away the incentive for saving money by using forced overtime," Murray says. The company ends up paying for forced overtime twice—to the employee and to the fund.

The UAW has spearheaded one of the most successful strategies to address forced overtime,

Mike Rodriguez, 36, is a member of Steelworkers Local 2102, which has been on strike against CF&I Steel in Pueblo, Colo., since October.

"I have missed so many things because I was forced to work overtime. I missed Christmas programs, missed everything my daughter did. I have two kids. Until this past October, I had never been able to see any of my oldest child's activities. I always had to work. Then in October, we went on strike.

"I work a crane in the steel mill loading 7,000-pound steel rolls onto trucks. That's stressful work. It takes timing and good instincts. But it is more stressful—and dangerous—when you do it for 16 hours straight without a break. That's right. Without a break to go to the bathroom or to eat. Luckily, I haven't had any accidents yet. I'm one of the younger guys. My body can take the stress, but I feel bad for the guys in their 50s and 60s.

"Sometimes, I wouldn't know that I had to work overtime until five minutes before my shift ended; somebody might call in sick and I'd have to replace him no matter what plans I had for the evening. If I refused, I could be laid off for six days.

"You can't leave your job station, so a lot of times I end up working 16 hours straight. You don't know how to plan or even when to eat your lunch. If I eat lunch in the first half of my regular shift and then have to go on overtime, then I have nothing left to eat. There are no food or

drink machines in the plant, so I have to hope that someone has an extra sandwich in their lunch to give me or I can't eat for 12 hours. I live right near the plant, so sometimes my wife brings a lunch up to the gate for me. But I can't go get it unless I'm clear for a minute and run out to the gate and run right back. But I could get fired for that because I left my station.

"If I need to go to the bathroom, I have to duck out and get back before anybody notices I'm gone.

"Every holiday, my supper was warming up in the oven, because I couldn't be home to eat with my family. The only holiday the plant shuts down is Christmas—and that's only for four hours. If you work the afternoon shift on Christmas, you have to go to work.

"My wife understands, but she doesn't like it. But my kids don't. How do you explain this to kids?"

On a roll: Wrap-around advertising on city buses is one

On a roll: Wrap-around advertising on city buses is one way Electrical Workers spread the union message in San Diego.



ext time you're in San Diego, chances are you'll see a union electrician riding the bus—on the outside. Bright blue buses rolling through the streets of San Diego provide the backdrop for "wrap-around" advertising that features giant images of electricians holding union certification cards—part of an education effort by Electrical Workers Local 569. The education campaign, which replicates photos of Local 569 members, alerts the public to look for union members' certification cards when they hire an

electrician, because the state

All Aboard the Tagic Bus

doesn't require electricians to be licensed or certified. "We want everyone to know about the advantages of hiring union contractors who work

with union-trained electricians," says Al Shur, business manager for Local 569. The buses are "providing us with an additional way to show our skills, pride and union certification to the public."

The marketing effort, which the union began in 1996 in conjunction with the National Electrical Contractors Association in San Diego, includes radio and television commercials, print ads in business and trade publications, public service announcements that promote electrical safety in homes and businesses and a public relations program that profiles prominent achievements of local members.

Ride 'Em

Steelworkers hitched on to a Wells Fargo coach at the company's San Francisco headquarters, riding the Wild West replica to Portland, Ore., in time for Oregon Steel's annual meeting in April. The horse-drawn protest is aimed at the role Wells Fargo has played in financing the steel company's anti-union campaign. Orcgon Steel forced 1,100 workers out on strike at its Pueblo, Colo., mill last October.



he Farm Workers proved again that "Yes, We

Can," when they won a legal battle establishing that the Latino civil rights slogan Sí Se Puede is the intellectual property of the union.

To reclaim its heritage, the union had to face off with AeroMexico, which had filed a trademark application, and MCI and NationsBank, all of which sought the slogan's use for commercial purposes. "Of course,

the United Farm Workers owns the rights to *Si Se Puede*, and companies seeking to profit by using the phrase without the union's permission will be challenged in federal court," says UFW attorney Brooke Oliver.

Coined by César Chávez and UFW co-founder Dolores Huerta while Chávez was fasting in Phoenix in 1972, the slogan has become a rallying cry for the union and millions of Latino labor, civil rights and community activists.



Name recognition: The civil rights slogan Si Se Puede will remain a call for justice and not become a clamor for commercialism, thanks to a ruling in favor of the UFW.

PAUL KURODA

Unions Give a Lift to Disabled Boys

Walking up eight steps to your home's second floor is a big challenge if you're a mother carrying two young sons with muscular dystrophy.

That was the challenge faced by Susan Hawver, a 38-year-old single mother of four in Kansas City, Kan. But when members of her late father's union—Local 12 of the International Union of Elevator Constructors—heard about her situation, they built an elevator to lift the boys to the second level of their raised ranch house. While Grant, 8, and Conor, 6, are not wheelchair bound, the disease has progressed so that climbing steps is no longer possible.

Local union contractors donated equipment, provided labor and made financial contributions. "This was one of those projects where you

ask people to help, and the response is just unbelievable," says Local 12 Recording Secretary Bernie Cassity. "We had a retired member who had just settled a long-standing gricvance who came by to pick up the check—and when he heard what was going on, he donated the whole thing [\$1,320]."

Local 12 members modified the equipment for the boys' special needs, Electrical Workers pitched in with the wiring and members of the Carpenters District Council apprenticeship program framed and walled the exterior elevator with donated lumber.

The elevator provides something special for Susan Hawver too, "It makes me feel a little closer to my Dad," she told the Kansas City Star. "It's almost like a memorial to him."

Shopfalk

research can give them the edge in developing campaign strategies. Although often overlooked, local libraries can be valuable resources.

Business and financial directories (either printed or on CD-ROMs) in the library's reference section are key resources. Many libraries carry the InfoTrac series of informational CDs that provide indexes, abstracts or the full text of published articles. InfoTrac's Business Index abstracts up to 850 business journals. The General Periodical Index indexes and abstracts 900 business and general interest periodicals and LegalTrac indexes more than 800 legal publications. From University Microfilms' ProQuest on CD, you can find Business Dateline (full text of articles from 450 regional business journals), Newspapers Fulltext (full text of American Banker, Christian Science Monitor, The New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post) and Periodical Abstracts (which abstracts hundreds of popular magazine articles).

Key to finding information on these CDs is to search effectively. Look for a description of the database; determine if the data cover the time frame you need; see how frequently the vendor supplies updated information; make a list of key-

ORGANIZERS' TOOLKIT

INFORMATION AN OPEN BOOK AT THE LIBRARY

words relating to the information you are seeking and refine your search if there are too many "hits."

A library's reference book section should include most of the following directories:

General Corporate Directories: 50,000 Leading U.S. Corporations (ranks by sales volume the largest U.S. corporations); Directory of Corporate Affiliations (subsidiaries, divisions and affiliates); Dun & Bradstreet Million Dollar Directory and Dun & Bradstreet Middle Market Directory (based on net worth above and below \$1 million); Standard & Poor's Register of Corporations (covers 45,000 companies and 450,000 officers); Standard & Poor's Corpora-

tion Descriptions (the 6,300 largest companies); Thomas Register of American Manufacturers (100,000 manufacturing firms) and Top 1,500 Private Companies.

Banking and Financial Directories: Best's Agents Guide to Life Insurance Companies (covers 1,300 insurance firms); Money Market Directory (information on 22,000 pension plans and more than 1,500 asset managers, useful in finding relationships between investment managers and union and corporate pension funds); Polk's Bank Directory (information on 15,000 banks) and Rand McNally International Bankers Directory.

The AFL-CIO Food and Allied Service Trades Department also produces a guide to corporate sleuthing. The *Manual of Corporation Investigation* is available free to FAST affiliates, and can be accessed at the department's website, fastaflcio.org. The cost for non-affiliated unions is \$25. Contact FAST, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-737-7200.

A week-long course, *Strategic Research for Organizers*, is offered at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies. For more information, contact the Registrar, George Meany Center, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20903. Phone 301-431-6400.

(Future Shoptalk articles will cover researching through Internet sites and courthouse records.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Q. I've heard Congress is attacking "salting." What's going on?

A. Salting is the practice of sending union organizers to work for nonunion employers to organize the workers in that shop. On March 26, 1998, the Republican-led House of Representatives narrowly passed legislation (H.R. 3246) to scuttle salting by telling employers they are only required to hire "bona fide employee applicant(s)," enabling them to legally refuse to hire this class of workers. The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Bill Goodling (R-Pa.), passed even though the U.S. Supreme Court has said salting is a legal, constitutional-

ly protected activity. In *NLRB vs. Town & Country*, the court unanimously agreed that "salts" are employees under the law and thus entitled to the same legal protection as other employees. The court said that when they go to work, union salts do not forfeit their basic First Amendment rights of free speech and association, or their right to organize. The anti-worker backed measure would reverse that. The Senate is likely to vote on the companion measure (S. 1981) later this year.

Q. I heard recently that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is no longer permitted to inspect workplaces. Is this true?

A. Last November, OSHA unveiled its "Cooperative Compliance Program" to give employers with high injury rates a choice of facing traditional agency enforcement or of working cooperatively with OSHA to reduce

workplace hazards and receive a reduced chance of inspection. Of the 12,000 such employers encouraged to join CCP, 10,000 accepted. However, a suit filed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business groups resulted in an injunction on Feb. 17, 1998, barring general schedule inspections in the manufacturing sector. Similar programs in the construction and maritime industries were not affected. Although the suit won't be decided until next year, the court said OSHA could implement an interim plan for targeted inspections—which the agency did on April 10. The targeted inspections are aimed at 3,300 employers in 99 industries with above-average injury and illness rates.

A new report by the AFL-CIO Occupational Safety and Health Department finds that it would take OSHA 109 years to inspect every business under its jurisdiction just once. For a copy of *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*, which provides a state-by-state profile of worker safety and health, call the AFL-CIO Support Services Department, 202-637-5041.



the current reality—of

sweatshops.

A HISTORY OF U.S. SWEATSHOPS
While some Americans

believe U.S. sweatshops are a thing of the past, union activists know better. And now, with a new exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, which includes a re-creation of the El Monte, Calif., 1990s-style sweatshop as a central feature,

museum visitors will learn that sweatshops continue to thrive.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A History of American Sweatshops, 1820–Present, looks at the origin of sweatshops and examines the reasons they still exist. The 3,000 square foot exhibit also explores the roles of immigration, political and social reform, the union movement, government actions and consumer reform.

One section is devoted to the tragic 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Co. fire that killed 146 workers, mostly women. The El Monte sweatshop recreation graphically documents how immigrants from Thailand were held in virtual slavery in an apartment complex with armed guards at the main entrance and barricaded doors and windows. Following a 1995 raid, the operators pled guilty to charges that included conspiracy and involuntary servitude.

UNITE, along with some clothing makers and retailers, helped sponsor the display. The exhibit at the Washington, D.C., museum runs through Oct. 30.

CHILDREN WITHOUT CHILDHOODS

Teamsters headquarters in Washington, D.C., hosted its first art exhibit, *Children Without Childhoods*, a document of child labor by photojournalist Earl Dotter. Dotter has documented the culture and struggles of working people, capturing their dignity and self-respect—despite their suffering.

The exhibit also featured photographs by Iolanda Huzak, a Brazilian-based photographer who specializes in documenting the history of "outcast populations." Huzak has pho-

tographed sugar cane cutters in Sao Paulo, women in the female penitentiary of Sao Paulo and children working in a variety of industries.

The exhibit coincided with the Washington, D.C., leg of the Global March Against Child Labor May 27.

UNION IMAGES 1998

The Chicago Labor Federation's Union Images

1998, a juried exhibit of more than 60 laborrelated artworks, drew 2,500 visitors during its weeklong run in April. The pieces were judged on both their artistic quality and portrayal of work-related themes, including union solidarity, equal opportunity, the rights of workers, pride in a craft and safety and health.

For instance, exhibit judges described Kathleen Scarboro as an

Art and work: "Woman Work-

Art and work: "Woman Worker With Scaffolding," a painting by Kathleen Scarboro, was part of the Chicago Federation of Labor's *Union Images* art exhibit.

artist who consciously chooses subjects that are part of a "forgotten population," and who are rarely chosen as subject matter for works of art, such as Scarboro's "Woman Worker With Scaffolding."

FACES BEHIND THE LABELS

The George Meany Memorial Archives in Silver Spring, Md., is hosting *Faces Behind the Labels*, a traveling photo exhibit spotlighting garment workers employed in sweatshops in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Featuring the photography of Roxane Auer, David Bacon and Robert Gumpert, the show documents the struggle of workers at work, at home and on the picket line. Primarily women of color, these garment workers suffer low pay without benefits, unsafe working conditions and arbitrary discipline. The show continues through July 3 and is dedicated to garment workers who seek to improve their working and living conditions while raising families on long hours and low pay.

The exhibit is sponsored by Sweatshop Watch, a coalition of labor, community, civil rights, immigrant rights and women's organizations, attorneys and advocates seeking the elimination of sweatshop exploitation. For information call The Meany Center at 301-431-5451. Stop by the Sweatshop Watch website: sweatshopwatch.org.

WOMEN'S SUMMER SCHOOLS SET

The University and College Labor Education Association and the AFL-CIO will sponsor three regional summer schools for union women. The week-long residential schools equip women trade unionists to participate effectively in the labor movement and tackle the challenges facing today's unions.

Sessions include workshops on organizing, handling grievances, leadership skills, public speaking and other topics.

The Western Women's Institute will be July 5–11 at the University of California, Berkeley. For information, call Kirsten Snow Spalding or Robin Baker at 510-643-8900.

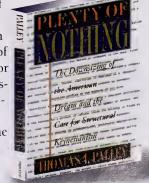
The Northeast School for Women meets July 18–24 at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. For information, call Dale Melcher at 413-545-6166.

The Southern School for Union Women will be August 1–5 at Cliffside Inn in Harpers Ferry, W.V. For information, call Joanne Spano at 304-293-3323.

PUBLICATIONS

Plenty of Nothing: The Downsizing of the American Dream and the Case for Structural Keynesianism examines an array of economic facts and arguments that demonstrate

how the interests of working families have gradually been sacrificed to those of corporations. Author Thomas Palley, assistant director of public policy at the AFL-CIO, rejects the myth of a naturally competitive economy, arguing instead



for federal monetary, fiscal, trade and regulatory policies that advance prosperity. \$27.95. Available from Princeton University Press, 1445 Lower Ferry Rd., Ewing, N.J. 08618; 800-777-4726.

ORGANIZING CITY CITY FOR JUSTICE IN OUR

July 31st-August 2nd

Chicago, Illinois

COMMUNITIES

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Join us for a very special two days to hear how union leaders are making their communities better places to live and work

- New Tactics to Support Organizing
- Community Outreach Around Workers' Rights
- Mobilizing Around Issues to Build Real Political Power
- Supporting Each Others' Struggles Through Street Heat Action
- Growing a Stronger Union
 Movement from the Ground Up

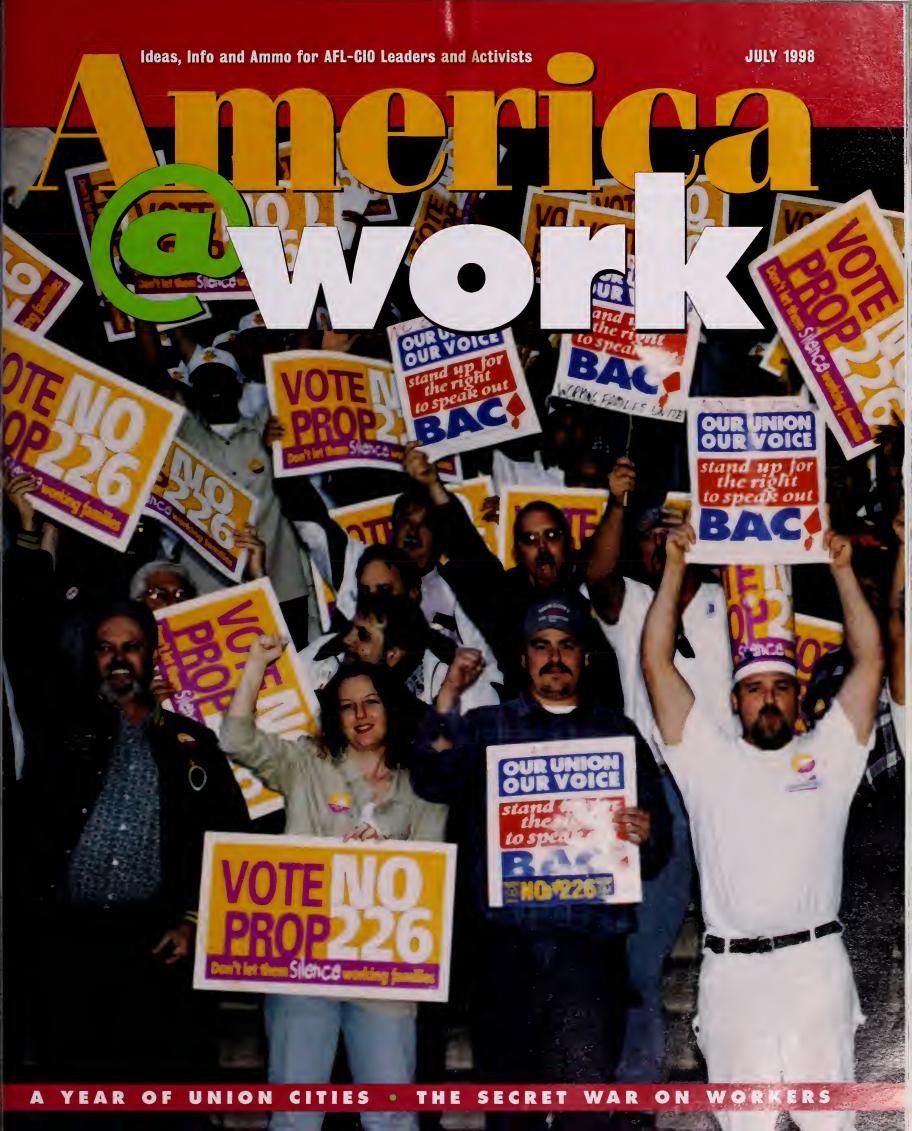
Union leaders committed to making their communities better places to live and work are mapping their route with the AFL-CIO's Union Cities initiative. By embarking on an eight-step organizing and mobilizing course, more than 130 Central Labor Councils, with their affiliates, are building solidarity as they travel the road to Union City.

A CONFERENCE FOR NATIONAL,
STATE AND LOCAL UNION LEADERS,
CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS,
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COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS

Yes—I want to attend! Union City by City ORGANIZING FOR JUSTICE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Return this form to: Ynez Wells, AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Dept., 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; Fax: 202-637-5012. Questions? Call 202-637-3919.

Special rates available at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers and with United Airlines. **Registration deadline: July 1.**





Ideas and Views From You

WESTBURY STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

The following were drawn from 17 letters sent by students enrolled in "Introduction to Industrial and Labor Relations" at State University of New York/College at Old Westbury:

(a) "I was appalled after reading the article on Quaker Oats' decision to move its Gatorade operations from a union factory to be replaced by low-paid, temporary workers....I only wish that more publicity was given to the corporate giants who put profits over people, so more working class citizens might join me in expressing their outrage at these practices by boycotting these companies."—Salvatore Vallone, Office and Professional Employees Local 153, Whitestone, N.Y.

@ "Do as I say, not as I do' is the message in your article, 'Union-Busting is Back'... [March 1998]. Unions have traditionally taken the position that they stand up for the rights of the disadvantaged, but in reading your article, we quickly learn the truth, and your truth is that the union bosses know what's best, and everyone better like it or else. Yes, we learn that your union doesn't care what the minority voice has to say."—Bruce Hallbert, Levittown, N.Y.

@ "Let's put more union members in Congress!...Mike Hall's '2000 in 2000' article [March 1998] brings out the fact that many union members have been elected to local governments. The article points out that 181 members of the U.S. Congress are bankers and business people. That is far too large a number. The quicker we have more union members in Congress, the faster we will have a better representation of a cross-section of America!"

—Thomas Cavataio, AFSCME Council 82, Local 1792, Stonybrook, N.Y.



When you see unions@work

and our

members@work

and collective power in our

communities@work.

that's when you see



Say What?

What has been your union's experience in running an organizing campaign without an NLRB election? Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

America@work

815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org



ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

@ "Always enjoy reading America@work. "I did notice on Page 17 of the May edition, Minnesota is listed as having a registration deadline of October 13, 1998. Minnesota has had election day registration since the mid-1970s. It works well, and we are usually among the top in percentage voting."—Terrence Rogers, national vice president, Eighth District, AFGE, Minneapolis, Minn.

HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY TO HOW YOUR UNION IS CHANGING TO ORGANIZE

(a) "My District Lodge 75... is actively pursuing leads for organizing. Although the strain on our business representatives and increased workload mean our bargaining units' grievance committees must shoulder more responsibility to continue service to our membership—well, we know that if we get all these contractors under union contracts, we can improve the community for all of us here.

"The Northwest Florida Central Labor Council has built a portable sign...that states, 'If you are tired of working for low pay, vanishing benefits, and want a union, call 1-877-4 A UNION.' This is the phone number for our Florida AFL-CIO Organizing Co-op....Hopefully, Northwest Florida will start turning around with some union jobs for our children to aspire for, rather than these low-pay, 'work-atwill, 'hired today, fired tomorrow,' insecure jobs."—William Danny Givens, vice president, Machinists Local Lodge 2777, Milton, Fla.



July 1998 • Val. 3, No. 6 **AFL-CIO Public Affairs Department**

815 16th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006 Telephane: 202-637-5010 Fax: 202-508-6908

E-mail: atwark@aficia.ara Internet: http://www.aficia.arg



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Many employers are waging a secret war
to prevent workers from improving their

to prevent workers from improving their lives by joining unions. But by involving the community, more and more workers are succeeding in their efforts to gain the economic security their families need—and the respect and voice they deserve on the job

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1166 n two critical victories for hotel employees, janitors and security guards, workers in San Francisco proved that member mobilization and political action pay off. For two years, members of SEIU Local 87, which represents the city's janitors, and the International Union of Security Guards, lobbied the mayor and city supervisors for job protection for lowpaid janitors and security guards who could lose their jobs without notice when buildings change contractors. The result: The Board of Supervisors passed the Displaced Worker Protection Act, which requires that incoming contractors rehire security, maintenance and janitorial employees for 90 days. Mayor Willie Brown-who started out as a janitor-backed the bill. The 8-3 vote culminated a campaign that kicked off in 1996 with a 2,000-person march and rally at City Hall. What followed was a coordinated campaign that included getting out the vote for prolabor supervisor candidates, building community support and lobbying the city government. On the night of the vote, more than 200 janitors packed the meeting room. "By their actions, they successfully fought to secure their jobs and their families' future, and served as an inspiration to all working people," says SEIU Local 87 President Richard Leung. Three days before the victory for janitors and security guards, a federal judge dismissed a challenge to the city's newly passed card-check/labor peace ordinance. Passed in February, the law is the first of 90-day guarantee: Members its kind in the country, and can require of SEIU Lacal 87 and the restaurant and hotel developers to enter International Union of Secuinto card-check agreements when the rity Guards won a law in

Hanared: CBTU President William Lucy, left, gives the President's Award ta UAW Vice President Ernest Laftan, right. The graup alsa awarded nine schalarships, twa af which were named far the late CBTU Director Leanard Ball and the late Cleveland Rabinsan, who were represented by their widaws, Jessie Ball, center left, and Dareen Rabinsan.





CBTU LOOKS TO BUILO COALIT

oalition-building, strengthening community ties and developing leadership skills to unite minorities in the workplace and community under unions' banner of economic and social justice for all were the objectives of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists at its 27th annual convention in May.

CBTU co-founder and president William Lucy, an AFL-CIO vice president, noted that trade unions historically have offered workers a bridge to the middle class and to better opportunities for the next generation of workers. "Why should that bridge now be closed to building cleaners, service workers, maids, poultry workers, farm workers, food processing workers and many others who toil in unsafe conditions for poverty wages?" he asked.

"The wage-freezing, jobdestroying, benefit-cutting, unionbusting, race-baiting, womanhating forces in our society are stronger and meaner and more determined than ever before," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told the 1,600 delegates. "That's why we need to work longer and harder and smarter than ever to build back our strength where it counts—by organizing in our industries, in our communities and in the political process."

he Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers' national campaign against Crown Central Petroleum continues to pick up major support from labor, religious groups and the government. The Baltimore City Council endorsed the AFL-CIO boycott of Crown and its Zippy Mart and Fast Fare gas stations and convenience stores—a move that affects the 350 Crown stations in Maryland. The company also has been hit with a class-action lawsuit by eight employees claiming racial and sexual discrimination. Several groups and residents of Pasadena, Texas, have filed another round of suits charging the company has polluted the neighborhood surrounding the refinery and caused severe health problems.

The union began the boycott after 252 members were locked out of the Pasadena refinery in February 1996 and replaced with less experienced nonunion workers.

San Francisca that requires new contractors to rehire

employees far 90 days.

city has a financial interest in their

developments. @

PUTTING THEIR BEST FOOT FORWARD

nion members were a large part of the more than 3,000 Washington, D.C., area participants in the 1998 Walk to Cure Diabetes. The two-mile hike around the Washington Monument and the National Reflecting Pool on May 17 helped raise more than \$500,000 for the Capital chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer

Richard Trumka joined local celebrities in welcoming the walkers and acknowledged the unions that signed on as sponsors of the march. He noted the increase in union participation resulted in a 20 percent hike in fund-raising over 1997. Trumka served as the union recruitment co-chair with Graphic Communications President James Norton.



BRANCHES OUT

ffering the same good service, low fees, reasonable loan rates and progressive investing as its flagship New York branch, Amalgamated Bank opened its doors in the heart of Washington, D.C.'s financial and lobbying community in May.

The UNITE-owned institution, founded 75 years ago for garment workers, was the first bank to offer unsecured personal loans to workers at the same rates charged to corporate and wealthy borrowers, and the first New York bank to offer free checking accounts.

Amalgamated offers no-minimum checking balance and low-cost housing loans, and gives employees time off to volunteer in their neighborhoods. At the same time, it encourages corporate responsibility by investing in socially responsible companies.

"It is good to see Amalgamated

added to the very short list of socially conscious banks in the District," says Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.). "Many big corporate banks are more focused on buying other banks than on serving the customers they already have."

"Amalgamated is for people who want to put their money where their heart is," adds Jay Mazur, bank chairman and UNITE president. A third branch is planned for Los Angeles.



SPOTLIGHT

o further its goal to mobilize at least 1 percent of its membership into active organizing, the Graphic Communications Union gathered 82 local union leaders and staff organizers for a four-day Membership Education and Mobilization for Organizing (MEMO) program in Cincinnati earlier this spring. Across the country, MEMO programs are becoming a key part of local and international union efforts to boost organizing by involving members and staff.

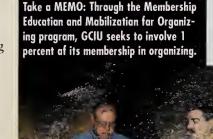
A key goal of MEMO training is to enable local union leaders to take MEMO back to their locals. GCIU's MEMO sessions focused on developing new organizing models in which stewards and members take active roles in campaigns. "I got tools out of this, and I understand how to use them," says Dick Conn, president of Local 543M in Omaha, Neb.

The union's MEMO program follows a year of active organizing, which involved a 35-city handbilling sweep and door-to-door organizing training in seven cities. Union leaders also presented the AFL-CIO's Changing to Organize program at regional GCIU conferences.

"We planted some seeds, and we've seen some results," says GCIU Vice President Garry Foreman, who is also acting organizing director. Foreman adds that the greatest potential for union outreach exists in the untapped resources of GCIU's membership.

"We have to mobilize members," he says. "We've got to convince them to organize."

If your union is interested in starting a MEMO program, call Bill Fletcher, AFL-CIO education director, at 202-637-5143.



Currents

AFGE Battles Massive Federal Privatizing Plan

egislation that would put the federal government up for sale over the next five years by privatizing all federal commercial contracts and throwing 1.4 million federal employees out of work is the target of a fierce battle by members of AFGE.

"Our jobs are in jeopardy, it's that

simple," says Mark Gibson, president of Government Employees
Local 1882 at Fort McCoy Army
Base in Wisconsin. [The legislation]
"would eliminate federal employees
at the working-class levels like
police, fire, and security. It would
open up all kinds of avenues for
unscrupulous and nonunion companies to rape the government and
the taxpayers."

AFGE has responded with a massive grassroots campaign against the so-called "Freedom From Government Competition Act" (S. 314 and H.R. 716). Under the banner "Gov-

Nobody Does It Better," AFGE members by the thousands are calling and sending postcards to members of Congress, urging them to vote against the bill. The union is keeping members informed with weekly alerts.

"It seems like this Congress has no appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of federal employees," Gibson says. "But they do have appreciation for those four or five big corporations that have most of the federal contracts."

ORGANIZING

AFGE Nearly 200 federal workers at the Naval Air Station's Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department chose representation by AFGE in May. They join more than 2,000 AFGE members already represented by Local 1603 at the Patuxent River, Md., facility.

AFSA School Administrators gained 589 new members at its Miami local with a landslide win by non-instructional administrators. Eighty-five percent of eligible voters cast their ballots in favor of AFSA Local 77.

AFSCME Council 31 in Illinois gained 114 new members in May when Head Start workers in Champaign County voted for the union.

HERE Local 74 in St. Louis won a representation vote among Aramark food service workers at Boeing/McDonnell Douglas, adding 125 new members. The win follows the addition of 100 members to Local 100 at the Smith Barney headquarters cafeteria in New York City.

OCAW An independent DuPont union voted for the first time to affiliate with a national labor organization. The 234 workers at the Edge Moor plant near Wilmington, Del., joined the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers in May. The company historically has fought to keep its unions isolated from the rest of the union movement. There are more than 8,000 DuPont employees in 21 independent unions.

SEIU The largest union of nurses in Maryland, the Professional Staff Nurses Association, voted to affiliate with SEIU, adding 1,200 registered nurses to the more than 100,000 nurses SEIU already represents. First priority for PSNA is getting a new bargaining agreement covering facilities operated by Dimensions Healthcare Systems, where nurses have been working without a contract for three years. In June, more than 200 doctors at Seattle's Medalia Healthcare prescribed membership in SEIU's United Salaried Physicians and Dentists as the cure for their workplace ailments.

UFCW The Toledo-based American Flint Glass Workers Union, one of the nation's oldest labor unions, will merge with the United Food and Commercial Workers, pending approval of both memberships later this year. Flint Glass Workers represents about 18,000 mold-makers and other workers in 125 locals at glass plants operated by firms such as Corning Inc. in New York.

UMWA In Johnstown, Pa., nearly 100 workers at United Metal Fabricators voted to leave a company union and affiliate with the Mine Workers. Nineteen Kentucky miners—10 of whom were hired a week before—also joined UMWA after management at Phillip Burden Mine in Greenville, Ky., backed out of a voluntary recognition agreement.

UNITE Fed up with bad treatment, no pension plan and exorbitant health insurance rates, the 100 employees of Mayfield Cap Co. voted to join UNITE. The Mayfield, Ky., firm, which supplies caps for professional golf, stock car racing and baseball teams, is owned by American Needle and Novelty.

HEALTH CARE A TOP PRIORITY FOR WORKING FAMILIES

eeting with AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in more than a dozen issues forums this year, working families across the nation identified health care coverage and affordability among their top concerns. The forums, in which union members had the opportunity to help shape a multi-year working families agenda for action, made clear that workers are losing confidence in their health care system. A majority of Americans believe that insurance plans often compromise the quality of care to cut costs and increase profits, according to a February 1998 Kaiser Family Foundation-Harvard University Poll.

A recent study by The Lewin Group for the AFL-CIO projects that up to 12.5 million more people will lose health care coverage over the next five years because employers are shifting premiums and out-of-pocket costs to their workers.

Already, 42 million Americans are uninsured. Cost-shifting has made it more difficult for working families with access to health care to afford it. Between 1988 and 1996, the average premium contribution workers paid for family coverage increased by 146 percent.

Union members, together with the AFL-CIO, plan to keep health care issues in the forefront as Congress gets set to debate various bills that would ensure quality, affordable health care for working families.

OUT FRONT

Organizing Child Care Workers

hild care workers earn an average of \$6.12 an hour, according to a study by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, and one-third of child care workers leave their jobs each year. This is hard on child care workers and the kids they care for: Children attending centers with high turnover and poor quality are less competent in language and social development.

To improve the conditions of child care workers and increase quality care, the AFSCME-affiliated National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees in Philadelphia recently chartered two new unions, one for child care workers in centers and another for those working in homes.

"We're fighting now for dignity," says Vickie Milhouse, an organizer with District 1199C, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, AFSCME. "This is a beginning."

Meanwhile, the Childcare Union Project (CUP), launched May 1 with National Working Together for Kids Day events in 35 cities, seeks to improve the low pay, long hours and poor benefits of child care workers nationwide. Backed by the AFL-CIO, CUP aims to provide employees with a voice in child care policy decisions, support increased public funding for compensation and offer information on the important role child care employees play in early childhood development. @

Childcare Union Project: Union and community members in Wisconsin collected postcards asking their members of Congress to support affordable, high quality child care in one of 35 actions across the country on National Working Together for Kids Day.



n more than 70 locations across America, working people made their voices heard the week of June 24. They told our country about their hopes for a better life and future through union membership, and the secret war forced on them by employers bent on dashing their dreams.

Paramedic Doug Coursey of Kingston, N.H., went live on local talk radio to tell of being fired—a day after his employer, North Shore Ambulance in Salem, ran an ad in the local paper praising him as a "rising star"—while the company appealed a close vote for the

Voices Heard

Making

Workers'

By John J. Sweeney

Teamsters. Three other union supporters there were fired as well. Health care workers made the point—in Los Angeles and Sacramento, Calif., and in Portland, Ore., Scranton, Pa., Providence, R.I., Norwalk, Conn., Iowa City, Iowa, Rochester, N.Y., and Baltimore—that patient care improves when workers have a voice on the job.

In Tallahassee, Fla., New York City and Watsonville, Calif., union and community activists rallied against anti-worker, anti-union campaigns by employers trying to thwart agricultural workers seeking to organize with the United Farm Workers.

Working families stood up for the right of public employees to organize in Atlanta, Louisville, Ky., Jackson, Miss., Spence and Fort Wayne, Ind., South Bay, Calif., and Syracuse, N.Y.

Workers also exposed employers that have refused to bargain once employees chose to organize a union. At the Atlanta Overnite Transportation Co. main terminal, workers voted for Teamsters representation three years ago, but until June 24, management refused to come to the table—despite several National Labor Relations Board complaints. Management changed its mind about bargaining when more than 150 union members and supporters picketed the terminal June 22 and others honored the picket line.

Worker-friendly elected leaders spoke out for workers' right to organize, with a mayoral proclamation in Roanoke, Va., a public hearing by Sen. Paul Wellstone (D) in St. Paul, Minn., and recognition in Amherst, Mass., of leaders who passed a local right to organize resolution. House Minority Whip Rep. David Bonior (D-Mich.) mobilized congressional support among pro-labor Democrats, 12 of whom gave speeches on the House floor backing the right of employees to join together free of threats or intimidation.

Clergy joined community supporters in many locations, and the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice released a statement linking the right to organize to the doctrines of most major denominations. "All religions believe in justice," said the committee's president, Bishop Jesse DeWitt. "And a fundamental voice for justice in the workplace is a union."

The events on and around June 24 got the nation's attention. Now it's up to us to make sure the public continues to hear from workers about their strong desire to join together in unions and the terrible things that happen to too many of them when they do.

AFL-C

he first year of Union Cities broke new ground for the union movement and its role in the community, and charted a course that enables unions to effectively help each other while restoring the public's understanding of unions as progressive institutions. The eight-step road map for CLCs—and local unions—provides a framework for building a grassroots movement that ensures no worker stands alone: the type of solidarity that must define the union movement in the

21st century.

accomplished the Union Cities goals.

families. And where unions organize, mobilize and reach out to community allies—building the power to change workers' lives. Here's a look at how some of those CLCs have

Together with local unions, central labor councils are trav-

eling along the road to Union Cities—places where workers

earn a living wage and have time to spend with their fami-

lies. Where employers respect the contributions of workers

and where elected leaders are held accountable to working

America@work

Changing to organize

GOAL: Promote organizing as the union movement's top priority and get the local unions involved in organizing.

CLCs have reached out to affiliated local unions to promote organizing by reinforcing the message they get from their internationals. In Atlanta, Labor Council President Stewart Acuff reports that 15 percent of CLC affiliates are actively organizing and the CLC has provided organizing assistance to UNITE, SEIU, Flight Attendants, Teamsters, Glazers and others. The CLC's mobilization on behalf of 450 Head Start workers—who had just voted for SEIU representation—was critical to the workers' first contract win last fall.

Fifty-six Union Cities CLCs are devoting more financial resources to support organizing. The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor became the first CLC to establish an organizing department, hire a full-time organizing director and pledge 30 percent of its budget to support the organizing of new workers in Los Angeles.

New organizing committees have been established in 37 CLCs, and at least 792 new member-organizers were trained. In Hartford, members from 11 different local unions house-called together to help win one local union's organizing campaign. The Denver Area Labor Federation has established a Strategic Campaigns Working Group with organizers from more than a dozen local unions. The group studies previous campaigns to see what works, and maps out tactics for new organizing drives—while also providing organizers a chance to learn from one another.

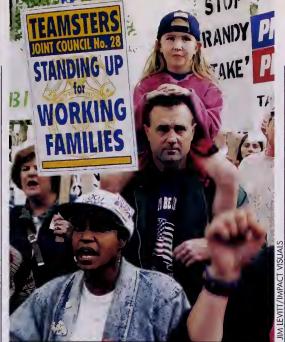
"We do a lot of cross-training. Someone may be good at member-to-member contact, but never has run a multi-faceted campaign," says Leslie Moody, federation president. "We can learn from each other."

Street Heat

GOAL: Mobilize and activate at least 1 percent of union members.

When Laidlaw Transportation tried to intimidate its 95 percent African American female workforce as they attempted to organize with ATU Local 627, the Cincinnati CLC mobilized its members—and the entire community.

Over several months, the 350 workers, many of whom had left welfare for marginal workfare jobs, were joined by hundreds of union members at two big rallies. Local clergy demanded a



Street Heat: In the year since Street Heat was launched, more thon 90,000 union members ond community ollies have mobilized in 374 events.

fair election, the CLC petitioned the school board and the Teachers and AFSCME backed the workers. As a result, the bus drivers steered a steady course—and voted for the strength a union brings.

The Cincinnati action is just one example of Street Heat, a rapid response initiative spearheaded by central labor councils that brings together members across union lines to help workers organize, put pressure on employers for fair contracts, hold lawmakers accountable, promote living wage laws and child care and demand equal pay for women. If it's a working families issue, Street Heat is there. In the year since Street Heat was launched, more than 90,000 union members and community allies have mobilized in 374 events.

"One of the great things about Union Cities," says Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, "is that it affords the opportunity for community groups who may have never communicated with one another, let alone the labor movement, a chance to come together for a common cause. That's so vital to building community power."

Street Heat efforts turned out part of the volunteer base of the more than 20,000

union members who took part in phone banking, door-to-door visits and member-to-member contact to fight Proposition 226, California's paycheck deception act.

Nationwide, Union Cities have come together in a coast-to-coast effort to back California strawberry workers in their struggle for respect and dignity. In dozens of cities, union members and religious, civil rights, women's and student organizations have called on local grocers to pledge their support and have spread the message throughout communities.

Street Heat mobilizations have run the

gamut in size and scope. For example, the Southwest Florida Central Labor Council came together for 11 Local 3444 Fire Fighters who lost their jobs when the Estero Fire Board arbitrarily terminated them and replaced the fire fighters with employees from the anti-union Wackenhut Corp. A seven-month campaign waged by CLC unions and community backers that includes marches, rallies and daily pickets paid off last September: Gov. Lawton Chiles fired four of the board members and the new board rehired the 11 fire fighters.

The Greater Boston Labor Council turned out 250 union members and activists to protest outside the Rogers Foam Co. plant in Sommersville, Mass., because one worker, Charlie Remington, had been fired for organizing activities with UNITE. As a result of the Street Heat action, the company offered Remington his job back with full pay.

On a larger scale, this past spring Florida's 10 CLCs came together to fill 33 buses for a 3,000-strong rally at the capitol in Tallahassee. The show of force was instrumental in defeating Florida's version of the paycheck deception act in the GOP-controlled legislature. State Federation President Marilyn Lenard says the Stand Up for Florida's Working Families rally also put working families issues on the radar screen and helped get improvements passed in child care, health care for kids and education. "The legislators showed us a lot more respect," she says.

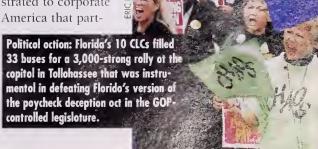
Building political power

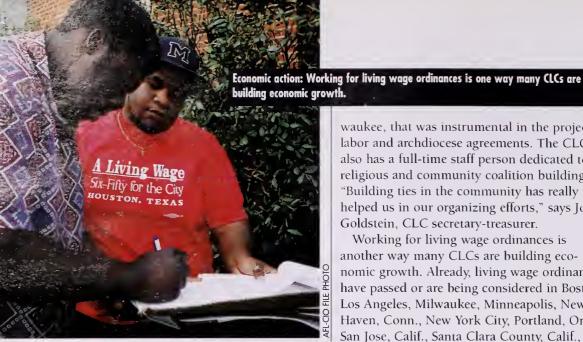
GOAL: Build community alliances and organize grass-roots lobbying and political action committees to work on local, state and national issues.

With many critical elections this year, 48 CLCs have set up new political and legislative committees. Overall, 215 CLCs, including all 130 Union Cities, will be heavily involved in Labor '98.

Last year, CLCs flexed their political muscle with Fast Track actions that helped derail anti-worker legislation. Massive mobilization efforts moved public opinion and congressional action toward defeat of the trade scam, while the 130 Union Cities' strong solidarity for

striking Teamsters at UPS demonstrated to corporate America that part-





time America won't work and played a decisive role in this victory.

In Rock Island County, Ill., the Quad City, Illinois and Iowa Federation of Labor took a strong stand against labor-supported candidates who, once elected, turned their backs on working families. "Working people were not getting cooperation from the Rock Island County Board," says CLC President Jerry Messer.

By the time the Democratic primary rolled around in 1997, the CLC had changed all that: Nine candidates either were carrying union cards—from AFSCME locals, the IBEW, Fire Fighters and IUOE—or they had pledged strong support for working families. Under the banner of the Solidarity Committee, affiliated unions "adopted" candidates, bringing their members out for rallies, phone banks and door-knocking for the candidates they backed. "We didn't win all the races," Messer says, "but we feel that winning six out of nine is a real success story and that we made the difference."

Local economic growth

GOAL: Organize community allies in support of economic strategies that create jobs and growth.

Union Cities CLCs are reaching out to community allies to promote working

family-friendly economic development. Although creating the atmosphere for economic growth is a long-term goal, the Milwaukee CLC is already well along the road. Its

efforts have helped secure project labor agreements for a new baseball stadium and civic center, strong minority contracting provisions and new guidelines from the Catholic Archdiocese on church construction and prevailing wages.

The Milwaukee CLC formed a community campaign, the Campaign for a Sustainable Mil-

waukee, that was instrumental in the project labor and archdiocese agreements. The CLC also has a full-time staff person dedicated to religious and community coalition building. "Building ties in the community has really helped us in our organizing efforts," says John Goldstein, CLC secretary-treasurer.

Working for living wage ordinances is another way many CLCs are building economic growth. Already, living wage ordinances have passed or are being considered in Boston, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Haven, Conn., New York City, Portland, Ore., San Jose, Calif., Santa Clara County, Calif., and St. Paul, Minn.

Common Sense **Economics**

GOAL: Enable union members to see the connection between workers' salaries and Wall Street.

Seventy-three Union Cities CLCs have held Common Sense Economic programs for thousands of union leaders, members and other working families. The program, designed by the AFL-CIO with its affiliates, enables workers to understand the real forces that shape our economy, and counters the misinformation of corporatebacked think tanks and conservative policy makers. A Common Sense Economics training includes study circles, computer-based materials, videos, publications and steward and activist training to encourage organizing, polit-

Workers' right to organize

GOAL: Persuade city or town councils and other local bodies to support the right to organize.

Workers' ability to join together freely to win collective bargaining rights is a fundamental civil right—and a key first step to leveling the playing field for working families. As a result of Union Cities efforts, at least 27 local government bodies have introduced resolutions supporting workers' right to organize, 18 of which have passed.

In May, the Fox Valley Area (Wisconsin) Labor Council's two-month drive for a right to organize resolution paid off when the Kaukauna City Council unanimously voted in favor of the resolution. A key part of the CLC's efforts included organizing group meetings and individual visits to lawmakers by workers who had been fired for organizing activities. The workers told lawmakers first-hand about the difficulties they face.

"The Union Cities program is an excellent outreach into the communities where our members and our potential members live and work, and shows America's working families that union membership benefits not only dues-paying members, but makes all our communities stronger," says Machinists President Tom Buffenbarger, who chairs the AFL-CIO Executive Council's state and local central labor council committee. "All the elements of the community—the religious, charitable, education segments, as well as the overall tax base—benefit from a strong union environment. And that makes for better living conditions for everyone as well as better working conditions for the workers directly involved."

LANDMARKS ALONG THE ROAD TO UNION GITY

ince Union Cities was launched in 1997, Union Cities central labor councils have:

ical and legislative work.

- Formed 74 new mobilization teams involving more than 90,000 members in 374 actions.
- Trained 792 new member-organizers.
- Joined together in more than 70 cities in June to turn a nationwide spotlight on the secret \$300-million-a-

year war employers are waging against workers when they try to organize.

- Staged the biggest upset in recent elections, while recruiting more than 24,000 new union activists in the fight to defeat California Prop. 226.
- Mounted 105 mobilizations against Fast Track, which would have put tens of thousands of jobs in jeopardy.
- Sponsored hundreds of rallies and mobilized tens of thousands of people in the successful 1997 Teamster strike against UPS.
- Created opportunities for women and people of color, who have assumed new leadership roles in 72 CLCs.
- Helped collect 400,000 signatures across Ohio in a CLC-backed referendum that repealed a minimum wage law that penalized workers.

Mirror the membership

GOAL: Ensure that all official CLC bodies are as diverse as the membership they represent.

CLC President Acuff reports that in Atlanta, a city with a racially and ethnically diverse workforce, "white men are no longer the majority on our executive board.

The leadership of all our committees reflects our overall membership. We held our first Pride at Work event May 1."

In a two-pronged effort to bring in a wider range of workers, the King County Central Labor Council in Washington actively recruited union members to run for board seats. "We worked with our constituency groups—Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Latin American Coalition of Labor Activists, Pride at Work—and found folks and encouraged them," says Ron Judd, King County CLC executive secretary-treasurer.

The results were impressive. March elections resulted in a diversified board that now includes women, African Americans, Asian Americans and a Latino member.

Overall, 72 Union Cities CLCs have new delegates or leaders who are women or people of color, reflecting the Union Cities tenet that union leaders should reflect the diverse community they represent and seek to organize.

Membership growth

GOAL: Reaching and maintaining a growth rate of 3 percent—the minimum needed to maintain overall union membership density.

When Tom Huddleston and other officers took office in January to head up the Big Sky Central Labor Council in Helena, Mont., the first thing they did was to visit all the affiliates.

They approached affiliates with the need to mobilize and organize, and got their permission to talk with local unions about building a base of activists. When they talked with the unions, they discussed the need for solidarity

Unionists are encouraged to take part in Union, City by City, a national conference on new tactics and local strategies to boost organizing, mobilizing and political action in the fight for economic justice. Call 202-637-3919 for more information on the July 31-August 1 gathering in Chicago.

CLEVELAND ROCKS FOR WORKING FAMILIES

ver since the Cleveland Federation of Labor became one of 130 central labor councils to join Union Cities last year, working families, through their local unions, have come together in unprecedented numbers to make a difference on the job and in organizing, politics and their communities.

Their message can be heard every morning across the city on the labor council's radio talk show "America's Workforce." In religious communities, unionists are joining local clergy to discuss dignity in the workplace with parishioners. In high schools, the council's community outreach is helping students raise proficiency test scores. Working families have held elected officials accountable through political action and mobilization. And just last month, the Cleveland labor council sponsored an entire week devoted to organizing.

On June 24, more than 70 central labor councils took part in a nationwide action to shed light on employers' secret war against organizing. In city after city, "A Day to Make Our Voices Heard" focused community attention on the faces, voices and stories of workers struggling to improve their lives through organizing. But a single day wasn't enough for Cleveland workers—the

central labor council sponsored an entire right-toorganize week, says executive-secretary John Ryan.

Cleveland's "Make Our Voices Heard" week included a congressional field hearing and a forum for local lawmakers so elected officials could learn first-hand about the barriers workers must overcome when seeking a voice on the job. The labor council also introduced right-to-organize resolutions in the city council and county commission.

The week-long series of organizing events built on the Cleveland labor council's well-established organizing efforts, which include an organizing network that ties into local unions actively involved in organizing; an organizer's round table; organizer mentoring programs and seminars for industry-specific campaigns, such as those in the building trades and the public sector.

Political action is also a key part of the Union Cities initiative, and the Cleveland labor council has scored success here as well. Last spring, a former state senator who had betrayed working families on several key senate votes was defeated by working families who rallied around a true pro-worker candidate—and pulled off what the local media called a miracle upset. Working families got their message out through phone bank calls, worksite visits and precinct walks.

While working closely with constituency groups such as the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Cleveland council has encouraged union members to serve on city and county boards. Last Labor Day, unionists spoke at 10 churches about the dignity of work and the union movement.

The labor council also held a meeting that brought together 17 women's groups to explore women's workplace issues, and is now launching a new campaign to alert low-income city residents about free medical care.



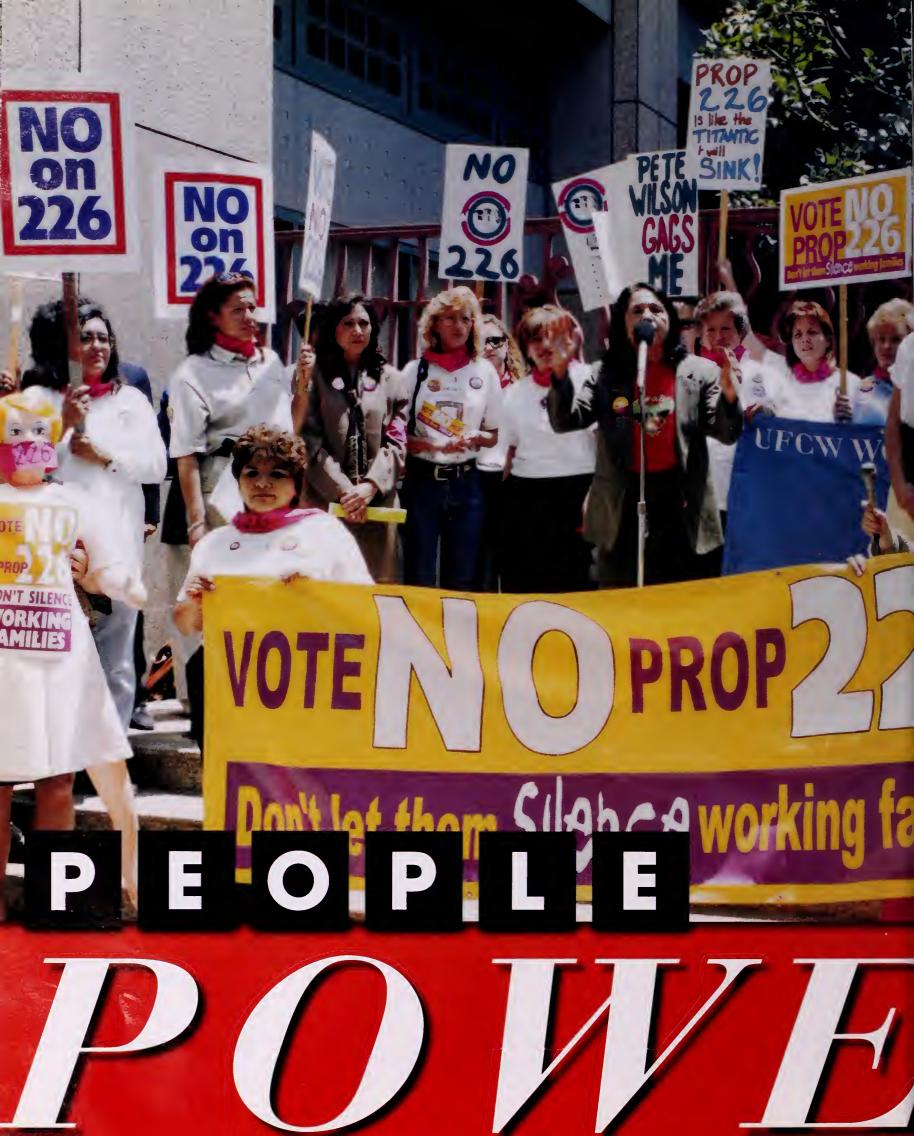
Working together: BCT members turn out to support a Cleveland AFL-CIO rally.

and the kind of power joint action can accomplish. "Lo and behold, we've grown by 750

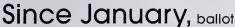
working families," Huddleston says. AFT, Health Care Workers, AFSCME, Steelworkers and IBEW now are actively organizing.

Marilyn Sneiderman, director of the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department, says the beauty of Union Cities "is that it encourages local unions to sit down and strategize about how to build a stronger, more unified voice for working families through their communities."

For information on how your CLC or local union can get involved in Union Cities, call 202-637-3919.







initiatives and bills proposed in more than half the states have attempted to put burdensome new regulations on unions—requiring members to sign written permission slips each year before their dues could be used for political and legislative activities. This nationwide, coordinated effort to silence the voice of working families—disingenuously called "paycheck protection" by its supporters emerged in California as Proposition 226. Spearheaded by out-of-state, corporatebacked millionaires, the California ballot initiative originally was supported by more than 70 percent of the electorate. But on June 2, working families voted against it 54 percent to 46 percent. Proposition 226's defeat represented a victory by and for working families and their union-based efforts in the weeks before June 2 provide a map for action in the 1998 elections and beyond.

Snapshots from the field

In San Francisco, Virgil Herndon, a retired Muni bus driver and TWU member, was almost always the last person to trudge out of the San Francisco Labor Council's phone bank. His job: calling Bay Area union members to inform them that Prop. 226 was an out-of-state

scheme hatched by Newt Gingrich and bankrolled by his millionaire buddies on the radical right.

• Registered nurse and AFSCME member Cheryl Obasih-Williams organized worksite visits, phone banks and community meetings that boosted her Los Angeles/San Diego local's participation from five volunteers in the 1996 elections to more than 100 workers who joined to fight Proposition 226.

• After working all day, Machinist Steve Lee walked precincts in Santa Barbara County almost every day for two months, getting the word out to working families that Prop. 226 had nothing to with do paychecks, but everything to do with silencing working families.

Your Worse Hear

• Clint McClesky and Robbie Hunter hit the precincts, made phone calls, stuffed envelopes, ferried signs—whatever had to be done. Their efforts helped defeat the initiative in normally conservative-voting San Bernardino County.

"There was too much at stake not to be donating as much time as possible," McClesky says. "A lot of our own members thought it sounded good at first. It took a lot of teaching people what this was really about. People changed their mind because of the contacts we made."

A lot of minds had to be changed. Just three months before working families pulled off one of the most stunning turnarounds in electoral politics, one poll found that union members *backed* Proposition 226 by 70 percent to 26 percent.

One-on-one contact

Union voters and their working family members completed a 180-degree switch on Prop. 226 and voted against it by 71 percent to 29 percent. As McClesky says, it was the one-on-one contacts. Over a two-month period:

- Volunteers made 650,000 phone calls to California voters explaining what Prop. 226 was *really* about
- Activists walked 5,005 precincts, reaching more than 600,000 union members and their families.
 - Workers visited 18,000 worksites to distribute literature to union members.
 - On election day, a workday, 3,500 union members participated in get-out-the-vote efforts.

"Most significantly," says Gerald McEntee, AFSCME president and chair of the AFL-CIO's Executive Council Political Committee, 24,000 political activists "were identified for future action in the





What it Took to Defeat California's Proposition 226

state," honing their skills for upcoming November elections.

'Break the unions'

Prop. 226 backers hoped their deceptively worded proposition would "crush labor as a political entity" and ultimately "break the unions." Those are the words of Grover Norquist, one of the right-wing zealots who devised the anti-worker scheme and whose Americans for Tax Reform ponied up nearly half a million dollars for the California initiative.

But it took more than money to defeat Prop. 226.

"They didn't count on one thing: people power," says Ricco Ricardo Clement, an IATSE cameraman.

"People power" got out the message that the state's paycheck deception act was not a grassroots drive by union members, but part of a coordinated, nationwide campaign by extremist groups, corporations and right-wing politicians who targeted California as one of 26 states on their anti-union hit list this year. Prompting the anti-worker initiatives and bills was the recent success of union members in electing more working-family-friendly candidates to office in 1996, raising the minimum wage, and standing up for job safety laws, Medicare and pensions.

If passed, Prop. 226 would have made it virtually impossible for unions to participate in the political arena, even though workers say that's exactly what their unions should do. Recent surveys show that three-quarters of union members, regardless of party, believe unions should invest "time and money in politics and legislation to counter the influence corporations and special interests have." The same corporations and special interests that were behind Prop. 226.

Getting out the message

Months before election day, unions began getting the message out to their members through worksite visits, union meetings and literature distribution. The UFCW prepared and delivered videos explaining Prop. 226 to tens of thousands of its California members.

Operating Engineer Joe Hibdon says that after his union brothers and sisters looked a little closer at 226, "they were mad."

"Here it was, a vote by the whole state, but it was just affecting union members." The out-of-state connection angered them to the point that "we had more volunteers on this issue than in a lot of past elections."

As word spread from union member to union member, more folks took up the cause and the truth behind 226 began to spread to union and nonunion workers alike.

Like a lot of colleagues, Obasih-Williams,

RN, works two jobs. As a result, the AFSCME nurse, who helped organize dozens of worksite visits and other efforts to defeat Prop. 226 says she

Listen up: Unionists confront Colif. Gov. Pete Wilson, who put \$1 million into the pro-Prop. 226 effort to silence working fomilies' politicol voice.



Get the message: UFW President Arturo Rodriguez and SEIU President Andrew Stern pitched in to stop Prop. 226.

doesn't always keep up with politics and legislation. "But our members were fired up. It [Prop. 226] was unfair and wrong."

While they increased their number of political volunteers from five, two years ago, to more than 100 last spring, the nurses in Williams' local union also reached out to other voters. They baked cookies and distributed

Nevada Court Strikes Down 'Paycheck Deception'

Just over a week after the June 2 election in which California's working families defeated Proposition 226, a court ruling struck down a similar referendum proposal in Nevada, calling it unconstitutional and prohibiting it from appearing on the November ballot. The ruling by the Clark County District Court stated that the initiative "unfairly targets labor organizations," "violates union members' First Amendment rights to free speech" and "interferes with private, voluntary check-offs in violation of the U.S. Constitution." The state Republican Party, which sponsored the initiative, decided not to appeal and did not file the initiative petition by the state's deadline—suddenly and decisively ending the paycheck deception effort in Nevada for 1998.

Even before the court ruling, Nevada GOP gubernatorial candidate Kenny Guinn had asked backers to pull their version of paycheck deception after the California vote. When they refused, he signed labor's counter-petition that reaffirmed the rights of working families to participate in politics. The Nevada victory now makes the counter-petition unnecessary.

In Colorado and Oregon, where similar initiatives could be on the ballot this fall, the 54 percent to 46 percent vote against California's paycheck deception act also sent a clear signal to the radical right.

In Oregon, the Republican candidate for governor is championing a bill that would cut public employees out of the political process. "What the California vote tells me," says Irv Fletcher, Oregon AFL-CIO president, "is that we can defeat it in Oregon. But it will have to be an educational campaign similar to what they did there."

Anti-worker forces hope to gather enough signatures in Colorado to put an even more draconian paycheck deception act on the ballot this fall. But defeat of Proposition 226 created a "trend," says Bob Greene, Colorado AFL-CIO president. "[The California vote] showed what our members can do when they get activated and know what they need to do."

Union members are firing back in the Rocky Mountain state, gathering signatures on three possible ballot measures aimed at businesses, including one requiring that all businesses make monthly reports to the secretary of state on their political expenditures.

"If you want to take us out of the [political] process, hang on, and we'll take you right with us," Greene warns.

So far, paycheck deception legislation has been stopped in 27 of the 31 states where it has been introduced.

Nationally, a scheme to include paycheck deception in a campaign finance reform bill was defeated in the House in March, but it is also part of a House GOP campaign finance bill expected to be introduced before Congress recesses in August. Other versions may be offered as amendments to other bills.

When Congress does debate reform, it should concentrate on "genuine political reform—reform that places real limits on campaign contributions and spending and removes limits on voter participation and turnout," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney says.

What the Press Had to Say

Newspapers across the nation noted working families' victory in defeating California's paycheck deception act. Here's a sample of what the print media had to say:

"The California vote is one more victory in what is becoming a string of successes for labor after years of decline."

-Wall Street Journal, June 4.

"On election day, the union rank and file mobilized like the best of armies. Organizers say that so many union volunteers showed up in some spots, that there weren't enough precincts for them to walk or phones to work."

—Los Angeles Times, June 8.

"Those who campaigned heavily for Proposition 226 spent much of yesterday trying to explain how they could have blown a 50 percentage point lead in four months to lose by six percentage points on election day."

-Washington Times, June 4.

"Mind you, the measure didn't bubble up from disgruntled union members, but from conservatives eager to weaken labor's political power."

—Philadelphia Inquirer, June 4.

them to health care workers and patients outside Kaiser Hospital in Panorama City. With each cookie, volunteers told voters about Prop. 226 and why it should be defeated.

In Orange County, the conservative cornerstone of California, union members achieved an incredible political victory that was a harbinger of 226's fate. On May 4, the Orange County Central Labor Council mobilized more than 200 community supporters and union members representing more than 14 unions to attend the Santa Ana City Council, where their strong showing contributed to the council's unanimous passage of a resolution condemning Prop. 226.

Community outreach

In San Francisco, 12 SEIU, HERE, TWU, Teamsters and OPEIU members who also represented the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and Pride at Work appeared on the local television talk show, "Labor on the Job," produced by the Labor Video Project.

Membership education and outreach beyond the union rolls began to turn the tide. As election day neared, one statewide poll showed Prop. 226 squeaking by with a two point margin, while another indicated it was headed for a two point defeat. Too close to call.

"In a marathon, it doesn't matter how you start. It's how you finish," Walter Johnson, San Francisco Labor Council secretary-treasurer, wrote in a midnight fax to affiliates, urging them not to let up on Monday, June 1 and election day. The result: Phone-bank volunteers filled the four phone-bank sites and nearly 200 precinct walkers showed up on election day.

Up and down California, an unexpectedly large turnout—71 percent of registered voters—went to the polls on June 2. Of those voting, 35 percent were from union households. Union voters who were aware of their unions' position on Prop. 226 gave it a "thumbs down" by 81 percent to 19 percent. Republican union members voted "no" by a 52-48 edge.

'California voters as a whole, saw this initiative for what it was: a thinly-veiled attack on working families and their unions," says Art Pulaski, secretary-treasurer of the California AFL-CIO.

"Voters realized that unions speak not just for union members, but working class people all over," says Patricia Allen, a Los Angeles Community College teacher and member of the College Guild/AFT Local 1521.

Exit polls showed that the biggest influence on union members who said 'no' to Prop. 226 was information from their unions. The polls also belied the Newt Gingrich-California Gov. Pete Wilson-Grover Norquist—claims that union members don't want their unions in politics: 72 percent say they are satisfied with their unions' political involvement.

Seventy-nine percent of voters said they

Coalition-building: In San Francisco, 12 HERE, OPEIU, SEIU, Teamsters and TWU members who also represented AFL-CIO constituency groups such as the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, appeared on a local television talk show.



MIKE HALL

voted against Prop. 226 because it would hurt unions' abilities to speak out for members on issues critical to working families, such as Social Security and health care, and that it would have given corporations an unfair edge over unions in politics.

Moving ahead to Labor '98

Come November, the lessons of California and Prop. 226 will play a big role in determining the success of working families and the issues they champion. In California, the 24,000 union members whose efforts were instrumental in defeating Prop. 226 will be at the core of Labor '98 efforts.

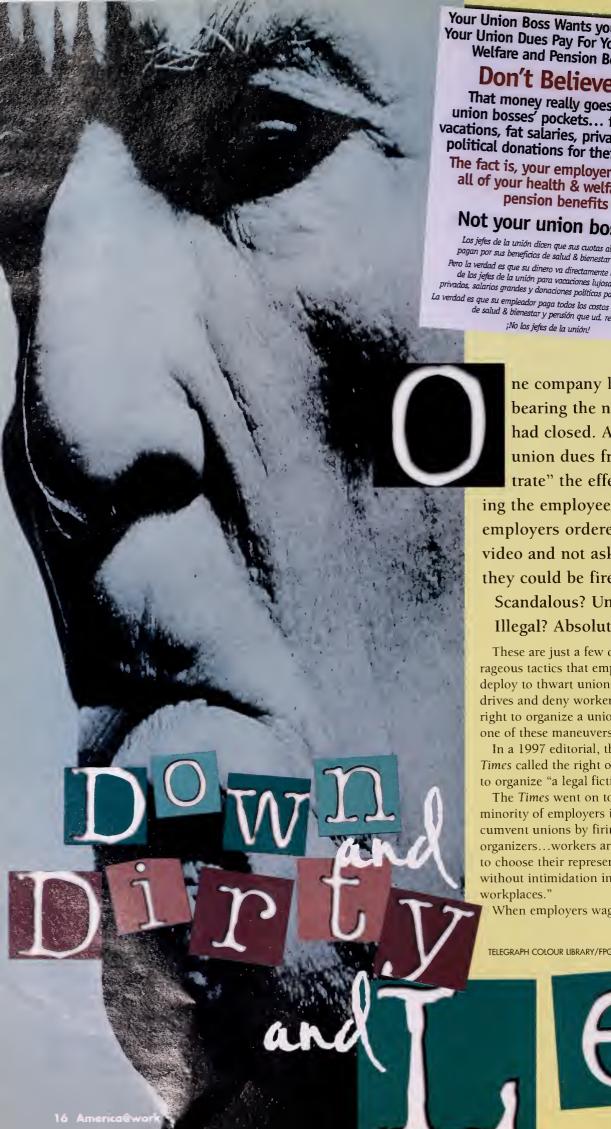
"We will work just as aggressively in November as we did around this proposition," says Beatriz Hernandez, a Los Angeles home care worker and SEIU Local 434B member.

As a result of the success of working families in defeating similar initiatives, only two more states could have Prop. 226-like initiatives on the ballot this year (see story page 14). Despite this success, many candidates in November will be politicians who have backed this concentrated attack on working families—and who intend to bring back these anti-worker initiatives and legislation again. At the same time, upcoming elections will determine who votes on "paycheck deception" provisions proposed as part of campaign finance reform bills now in Congress. In Nevada, for instance, U.S. Senate candidate Rep. John Ensign (R) voted for paycheck deception when it was up in the House of Representatives this spring.

As with the defeat of Prop. 226, the key to success at the November polls will be one-onone contact—getting the message out through education, mobilization and community outreach. If repeated in cities and states across the nation, the same steps that resulted in working families' success in California could create the momentum for victory in Labor '98, propelling working families and their issues to the political forefront.



the AFL-CIO executive vice president, second from left. spearheaded the coordinated union fight against Prop. 226



Your Union Boss Wants you to believe Your Union Dues Pay For Your Health & Welfare and Pension Benefits.

Don't Believe It!

That money really goes in the union bosses' pockets... for luxury vacations, fat salaries, private jets and political donations for their friends. The fact is, your employer pays for all of your health & welfare and

Not your union bosses!

Los jefes de la unión dicen que sus cuotas al sindicato pagan por sus beneficios de salud & bienestar y pensión. Pero la verdad es que su dinero va directamente a los bolsillos de los jefes de la unión para vacaciones lujosas, aviones privados, salarios grandes y donaciones políticas para sus amigos. La verdad es que su empleador paga todos los costos de sus beneficios de salud & bienestar y pensión que ud. recibe. ¡No los jefes de la unión!

Employers are waging a secret war against workers who seek to improve their lives by joining a union. But by involving the community, more and more workers are succeeding in their efforts to form unions and gain the economic security their families need—and the respect and voice on the job they deserve.

BY JAMES B. PARKS

ne company lined its entrance with gravestones bearing the names of unionized companies that had closed. Another deducted the equivalent of union dues from each worker's paycheck to "illustrate" the effect of unionization, before reimburs-

ing the employees in a separate check. Some employers ordered workers to watch an anti-union video and not ask any questions; if they did not obey, they could be fired.

Scandalous? Unfair? Absolutely. Illegal? Absolutely not.

These are just a few of the outrageous tactics that employers deploy to thwart union organizing drives and deny workers their civil right to organize a union. Every one of these maneuvers is legal.

In a 1997 editorial, the New York Times called the right of workers to organize "a legal fiction."

The Times went on to say that "a minority of employers illegally circumvent unions by firing union organizers...workers are not free to choose their representation without intimidation in some workplaces."

When employers wage a secret

war, it takes its toll not only on the workers, but on the entire community. But by involving the community, more and more workers are succeeding in their efforts to improve their lives and form unions, to gain the health care and pensions their families need and the respect and voice on the job they deserve.

At the same time, unions increasingly are utilizing cardcheck recognition, seeking neutrality agreements from employers and forming coalitions with natural allies such as consumers and clergy to confront companies that

TELEGRAPH COLOUR LIBRARY/FPG



fight workers' right to form a union in an attempt to avoid the one-sided NLRB election process. Card-check recognition is achieved when an employer agrees to recognize the union after a majority of employees sign cards seeking union representation. Neutrality is reached when an employer agrees not to conduct any activities to try to influence an employee's vote.

Worker democracy denied

In 1935, when the NLRA was passed, the framers of the bill recognized that the only way employees could decide freely whether to join a union was without interference from the employers who controlled their livelihood. But in 1947, a Republican-led Congress passed the Taft-Hartley amendments to the NLRA, which

Cammunity invalvement: With cammunity support, 350 mainly African American female school bus drivers avercame employer intimidation and threats to jain Amalgamated Transit Union in Cincinnati.

anti-union meetings with security guards at the door.

At one meeting, the hotel manager was dressed as the sinister Star Wars character Darth Vader. "It was scary and surreal. It was psychological warfare," says Gail Escobar, a dining room employee.

"The hotel told us the union was a vulture and that really hurt because the vulture is a terrible animal," says Jose Nativi-

dad Casillas, who works at the hotel. "We're the union. The union is inside of me and inside of my co-workers. We're human beings.



GARY MAUER/ATU

"When we're short-staffed—and that's almost every day—we each have 14 patients to care for," she says. "You can't give the care you want to give." Jackson believes one reason the nursing home is short-staffed is due to the company's efforts to scare workers away from joining a union: The Genesis home requires employees to attend grueling two-hour mandatory meetings to hear anti-union propaganda.

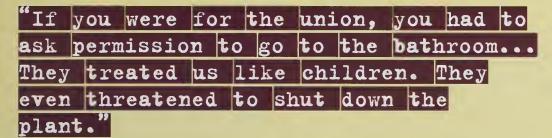
Union-busting: a growing industry

It's becoming the norm for employers to rely on consultants to provide sophisticated strategies to keep out unions—spending what some estimate at \$300 million a year to crush workers' desire to join unions. In his book *Confessions of a Union Buster*, Martin Jay Levitt explains some of the tricks he used to thwart union campaigns: "My team and I routinely pried into workers' police records, personnel files, credit histories, medical records and family lives in search of a weakness that we could use to discredit union activists." Levitt worked for the Chicago-based Sheridan Associates until 1975 and was a freelance union-busting consultant until 1983.

Through slick, misleading advertising and scare tactics, these consultants browbeat companies to employ their services. For example, Executive Enterprises wields loaded phrases such as "massive organizing drives," "explosions of public support" and "tough union organizing" in its nationwide seminar "How to Stay Union-Free into the 21st Century."

The "Union-Free" seminar sessions carry titles such as "Why the Changes in the AFL-CIO Leadership Will Increase Your Chance of Being Organized" and "How To Develop a Step-by-Step Strategy to Preserve Your Company's Union-Free Status," which promise to show how to "lawfully and effectively convey your union-free commitment to your employees without committing an unfair labor practice."

These scminars teach how to speak out against workers signing union cards even before an organizing campaign begins. Another explains how employers can modify staff par-



—LORRAINE BAKER, EMPLOYEE, LANDIS PLASTICS PLANT, SYRACUSE, N.Y.

dealt a knock-out blow to worker democracy: the amendments allow employers to campaign against the union so long as there is "no threat of reprisal or force or benefit."

Employers cannot browbeat their workers into voting for a specific presidential or congressional candidate. But the same is not true in union elections. Federal and state election laws are written to protect citizens' right to free choice without being coerced by an employer who hires and fires and determines wages—except when that decision is whether to join a union.

Employers have developed sophisticated techniques to tread around the edges of the law without breaking it. For example, management at the Miramar Sheraton in Santa Monica, Calif., never directly threatened or intimidated workers, but engaged in elaborate mind games to try and stop a HERE campaign. They hung posters depicting a union organizer as Adolf Hitler and forced workers to attend

We're not animals."

In the past few years, as janitors employed by Somers Building Maintenance in Sacramento, Calif., sought to join SEIU Local 1877, the company recognized a sham union instead. According to SEIU, the company-appointed union shop steward attacked and beat two Local 1877 supporters, one of whom required hospitalization. The attacker admitted to both assaults under oath, but was never fired by the company.

Lorraine Baker worked at the Landis Plastics plant in Syracuse, N.Y., where she says women are paid less than men, subject to discriminatory work rules and get fewer breaks. Their pay is docked for any absence, even if to care for a sick child.

When the workers approached the Steelworkers about forming a union, management responded with an intimidation campaign so severe the NLRB asked for a federal injunction to stop it. The company now is mounting extensive legal challenges to prevent a fair election.

"Suddenly we were treated differently," Baker says. "If you were for the union, you had to ask permission to go to the bathroom. You weren't allowed to chew gum or eat a candy bar. You got penalized for the silliest things. They treated us like children. They even threatened to shut down the plant."

Jannettie Jackson works for a Genesis nursing home in Baltimore, and like hundreds of her co-workers wants to join a union.



ticipation and empowerment programs to avoid unfair labor practices, conduct a union vulnerability audit, create a workplace where "everyone believes that working union-free is the better way" and use alternative dispute resolution to avoid union organizing.

Workers, families and community

The civil rights movement of the 1950s fought against legal racial segregation. As the union movement works for economic justice for all people, the right to organize is the civil rights issue of the 1990s. The goal of the two movements is the same—human rights. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said at the 1961 AFL-CIO convention, "Our needs are identical with labor's needs-decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children and respect in the community. That's why the we support labor's demands and fight laws which curb labor."

Many of the techniques are the same. Civil rights leaders sought community support to win passage of laws that uphold the right of all people to enjoy basic freedoms. Working people are forming broad-based community coalitions to improve their lives by having the free choice to join a union. These coalitions' issues include civil rights, economic and social justice, gender equality and family.

Central to these coalition efforts is holding businesses accountable to the communities they serve. The message these activists seek to convey: If you're doing business in our town, it's not okay to deny workers their freedom to organize and improve their lives.

Employers have developed strategies to exploit NLRB laws and prolong the process, often through legal challenges and appeals that take years to settle. The strategy is designed to tie up union funds and staff time in long-running court cases, and to erode worker enthusiasm for a union. Sometimes, the cases run long enough that new workers, less sympathetic to the union, have been hired and the

Teachers win: AFT President Sandra Feldman congratulates Dallas teachers, 9,000 of whom joined AFT after a multi-year effort.

union loses the next election.

To avoid these costly legal delays, unions have begun to use card-check and neutrality agreements in lieu of NLRB elections, while building community support. Local civil rights and religious groups, students and union members have formed partnerships that pressure employers to

accept card-checks. The combined efforts are succeeding in getting employers to agree to remain neutral and let workers decide if they want to join a union.

A community-wide campaign worked in Cincinnati, where 350 mainly African American female school bus drivers overcame employer intimidation and threats to gain representation by the Amalgamated Transit Union. The workers won support from clergy, the NAACP, an elected school board member and other unions. An area-wide rally, days before the election, helped the workers overcome threats from the company.

Community support also helped workers in Dallas, where 9,000 teachers joined AFT after a multi-year campaign that included electing sympathetic school board members. The strategy to elect members worked: The new board did not mount an anti-union campaign or commit any unfair labor practices.

Meanwhile, in Illinois, after a nurse was fired for supporting the union's campaign among private-sector group home workers, nurses formed coalitions with AFSCME-represented state mental health workers, parents of patients, community leaders and elected leaders and won AFSCME representation. Some 700 Washington, D.C., parking lot attendants generated interest from customers, property owners and the local Ethiopian community, winning an April card-check campaign to join Parking and Service Workers Local 27 HERE.

To shine a light on the secret war waged by employers, workers around the country joined

together June 24 for "A Day to Make Our Voices Heard" to get out the message that when they choose to join a union, employers must respect their choice. The day of action publicly showcased the successes and heartaches workers experience as they form unions to get a better chance for themselves and their families, to have a say on the job and to lift living standards throughout the community. "A Day to Make Our Voices Heard" was the nationwide expression of working families seeking to regain their freedom of choice.



Anti-Worker CEOs Make Big Bucks

One of the biggest scandals in the new economy is the gap between CEO pay and workers' wages. CEO salaries are now 500 times that of the average factory worker, up from 44 times in 1965. The situation is especially outrageous in companies where workers are denied the opportunity to join together in unions to gain their fair share of the fruits of their labor.

Here are two bad actors in corporate America and how much they were paid in 1997—and some of the tactics they used to try to bust union organizing.

- Baltimore Gas & Electric: The company held captive worker meetings to attack the IBEW organizing drive and paid \$40 million to a union-busting consultant. In 1997, CEO Christian Poindexter made more than \$1 million in salary and other compensation.
- · Laidlaw: Workers at Laidlaw's Cincinnati facility had to seek community support to be able to join ATU without threats and intimidation from the company. Last year, CEO James Bullock made more \$2 million in salary and other compensation, and was awarded almost \$2.4 million in stock options.

These figures and more information on corporate excesses are available on the AFL-CIO Executive PayWatch website (www.paywatch.org).

Tools of the Trade for Union Busters

Seventy-five percent of employers seek to deny workers their choice to form a union. Here's how:

- 80 percent hire professional consultants to fight unions.
- 91 percent hold mandatory, closed-door, one-on-one meetings with employees to attack workers' unions.
- 80 percent hold one-on-one sessions with supervisors to train them how to attack workers' unions.
- 32 percent fire employees who are active in helping other workers join together in unions.
- 77 percent distribute literature attacking workers' unions.
- 50 percent threaten to eliminate all workers' jobs if they join together in a union.

Source: Kate Bronfenbrenner, Cornell University School of Labor and Industrial Relations

Like It Is

TA OUR PATIENCE

America's Working Families Need a Fairer System

orking families have suffered years of stagnating or declining real wages. Yet today, they pay a higher percentage of their incomes in taxes, while corporations and the

wealthy pay a smaller percentage than they did 20 years ago.

The effective tax rate on corporate profits declined from 40.1 percent in 1979 to 28.1 percent in 1994. In 1996, the richest 1 percent of taxpayers, with pre-tax incomes averaging \$632,330, paid an average \$46,792 less in taxes than they would have if the tax system of 1977 were still in place.

By contrast, the middle 60 percent of taxpayers paid hundreds of dollars more on average (\$311 more for the middle fifth of taxpayers with 1996 pre-tax incomes averaging \$34,501).

A key principle of tax fairness is that taxes should be based on ability to pay. That is, people with higher incomes should pay a greater percentage of their earnings in taxes than people with lower incomes—what's known as a "progressive" tax system. In a "regressive" tax system, big business and the rich don't pay their fair share of taxes, while those who work in

America's factories, schools, offices and hospitals wind up paying more than they should.

Some congressional lawmakers and others on the right now seek outright repeal of what remains of the nation's progressive income tax, falsely calling their proposals "fundamental tax reform" (see "A Tale of Two Taxes," February America@work). Regressive schemes such as the flat tax and the national sales tax may sound good on the surface, but would be a lousy deal for working Americans.

The current tax system has serious problems, but they would be made even worse by these proposals to soak the middle class.

There are several concrete steps (few of which are on the nation's current political

agenda) that could make the system fairer for America's working families:

• Make state income taxes more progressive, and shift more of the state and local revenue burden away from regressive sales and proper-



ty taxes. State taxes have become more regressive in recent years, as income taxes have been cut while sales and property taxes have been increased. The opposite should happen. State income taxes should be made more progressive by creating new tax brackets for incomes exceeding \$200,000 per year.

• Uncap the earnings base for the Social Security payroll tax. High earners should pay at least as great a percentage of their income into the Social Security trust fund as low and middle earners do, and employers should be required to pay a matching amount. Currently, CEOs making \$5 million per year pay the same in Social Security payroll taxes as workers making \$70,000 per year because Social

Security taxes only apply to the first \$68,400 of annual earnings. Uncapping the earnings base, as was done several years ago for the Medicare portion of the payroll tax, would generate billions of dollars for Social Security while making the tax system fairer.

• Tax capital gains of the wealthy at the same rate as workers' wages. There is no economic justification for taxing capital gains—which primarily benefit the rich—at a lower rate than workers' hard-earned wages. In fact, a lower tax rate on capital gains creates incentives for wasteful and economically inefficient

tax shelters.

· Consider a wealth tax. With a booming stock market, skyrocketing executive pay and record- shattering corporate profits, wealth now is more concentrated in the United States than at any time since the 1920s. Much of this wealth has been accumulated at workers' expense through layoffs, plant closings and corporate restructuring-often as a result of Wall Street's relentless pressure for short-term increases in stock prices. Directly taxing wealth would address the growing inequity between working people and the ultra-rich. Economist Ed Wolff calculates that a modest federal wealth tax with a \$250,000 personal exemption and marginal tax rates starting at 0.05 percent and reaching as high as 0.3 percent on large personal fortunes would raise \$48 billion each year.

There are many other possible tax reforms, but the key for the American

labor movement and its progressive allies is to regain the offensive on the tax issue. Too often, the public debate revolves around which of the regressive tax packages advocated by the corporate right and its wealthy allies should be adopted.

Instead, we need to redouble our efforts to frame a new debate—one in which changes such as those outlined here become the focus of public discussion and legislative negotiation.

Excerpted from "Taxing Our Patience: Why Workers Pay More and the Rich Pay Less," WorkingUSA Magazine, March-April 1998, by Sheldon Friedman, an economist in the AFL-CIO Public Policy Department.

On line: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson is spearheading the Federation's efforts to bring Internet access to urban and rural schools.

Querido Sra. Gómez:

Yo me Marno Angélica Lozario.
Soy una estudiante de la escuela 96. Estoy en 2
grado. Cracias por ayudarnos a habbar: con el VicePresidente en las computadoras. Me gusto cuando nos
hicieron preguntas. Me gusto cuando nos respondiciono

Dear Mrs. [Chavez-Thompson]:
My name is Angelica Lozano. I am a student at 96th
Street School (Los Angeles). I am in the second grade.
Thank you for helping us talk to the vice president
through the computer. I liked it when he asked us questions. I liked it when he answered our questions.
Sincerely, Your friend, Angelica Lozano

Sinceramentes Su amigas Angelica Lozana

5-15-98

Union Members WII 6 Schools for the Future

More than 1,000 schools have been "wired" by union members, as part of union commitment to bring computer access to schools in urban and rural areas.

The thousands of union volunteers who have donated their weekends and free time were praised at a recent press and video conference by Vice President Al Gore, who described them as heroes "who have worked so hard in their communities to make this possible."

On "Net Days," volunteers show up at selected schools to wire all the classrooms and libraries to the Internet. Communications Workers Dis-

trict 6 members have wired 550 schools in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas, and CWA District 3 volunteers provided Internet access to 233 schools across the South. In Boston, Electrical Workers Local 103 tied in 70 schools, and is committed to completing 50 more by October. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino says the volunteers have contributed more than \$400,000 in labor.

More than 700 of the schools that union members have wired are in urban "empowerment zones," areas with some of the poorest schools in America.

Last year, the AFL-CIO launched an initiative to help bring Internet access to schools in response to the challenge made by the Clinton administration that every classroom in America become wired for the "information superhighway" by 2000. Spearheaded by Federation Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, the union program is "a way for the union movement to pay back communities that have given us so much support," says Chavez-Thompson.

No RUSH

ommuters stuck in traffic in Washington, D.C., will have plenty of time to read "Rush R. Gridlock," a new pseudo-advice column appearing in area newspapers. The column, really an ad bought by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689, includes letters from fictitious residents that contrast the public's favorable attitude about public transportation with the reality of funding cuts and reductions in service for Washington, D.C.'s primary transportation system—cutbacks that are hurting lowincome working families and the elderly.

New ads, with letters from Riled in Rockville, Angry in Arlington and Vexed in Virginia, run each week in six suburban county papers and the District's free weekly City Paper. "We wanted to voice our issues, put pressure on the local politicians behind these cuts and to talk favorably about

the leaders who do support our position," says Craig Simpson, Local 689 financial secretary.

The union's 5,900 members are bus and rail operators, and maintenance and clerical workers at Metro, the area transit authority, which is facing cutbacks in funding and service and threatened with privatization.

The local now is looking at running radio ads featuring Rush R.
Gridlock during—when else?—
rush hour.



Traffic Got You
All STRESSED Out?

NI: It = : IUS : H

RUSH R

Gridlock
ON METRO TRAFFIC!

schools across the country.



earing caps and gowns, union workers and their supporters at the University of Southern California gathered at 6 a.m. on a Los Angeles street corner in May to receive "Diplomas in Justice" bestowed by the Rev. James Lawson, a veteran civil rights leader. After the ceremony, 37 of the "graduates," including Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11 President Maria Elena Durazo, Lawson and a handful of USC students, were arrested for blocking traffic.

The mock graduation coincided with USC's commencement ceremonies, which featured comedian Bill Cosby. But there

was nothing funny about the workers' ceremony, a civil disobedience action against USC, which has held their contract hostage for almost three years.

"They want the right to eliminate the jobs of the food service and housekeeping workers," says James Elmendorf of Local 11, which represents 340 workers at USC. "What good will the contract improvements be if there are no jobs?"

The workers have held marches, demonstrations and other actions, and struck from April 29 to May 14, demonstrating at the offices of USC trustees, including Willis B. Wood Jr., CEO of Pacific Enterprises, the parent company of Southern California Gas Co.

Among supporters at the workers' graduation was senior Diana Bennett, who passed up the official

USC ceremony to join the mock graduation. "The bottom line is I wouldn't have been comfortable shaking President [Steven] Sample's hand," said Bennett, according to the Los Angeles Times. Bennett, an international relations major, held down two jobs and worked hard to get her degree, "but I'm pretty proud of the justice degree, too," she added. @ Union groduotes: HERE Local 11 staged o mock groduotion at USC to protest proposed loyoffs of food service workers and housekeepers.

BOYCOTT ALERT

The AFL-CIO has taken the rarely used step of calling for a national boycott of Oregon Steel Mills and its main financial backer, Wells Fargo Bank. The companies are waging war on 1,000 Steelworkers in Pueblo, Colo. Last October, the company forced the workers at CF&I Steel Mill (now Rocky Mountain Steel) out on strike by repeatedly violating U.S. labor laws. (The National Labor Relations Board has charged the company with more than 100 illegal labor practices.) The Federation is asking its 72 international unions, their 30,000 local unions, individual union members and central labor bodies to avoid doing business with OSM and to close any accounts they have with Wells Fargo.

UNION LINE

A Few Things You Auto Know

Passenger cars and trucks generally are the second largest purchase families make. And because the average American family owns two vehicles, car, van and truck purchases have a significant impact on the nation's economy.

But as foreign manufacturers add new plants in the United States and American automakers import some of their product line, it is often difficult to figure out which models are union made.

The easiest way to determine where a vehicle is manufactured is to check the Vehicle Identification Number. A VIN starting with 1 or 4 is made in the United States and a 2 is made in Canada.

The following list can also help you buy American:*

CHRYSLER: Cirrus, Concorde, LHS, Sebring Coupe, Town & Country.

DODGE: Avenger, Intrepid, Neon, Stratus, Viper, Caravan, Grand Caravan, Dakota, Durango, Ram Pickup, Ram Van, Ram Power Wagon.

PLYMOUTH: Breeze, Neon, Prowler, Voyager, Grand Voyager.

EAGLE: Talon.

JEEP: Cherokee, Grand Cherokee, Wrangler. FORD: Contour, Crown Victoria, Escort, Mustang, Taurus, Aerostar, Econoline, Club Wagon, Explorer, Expedition, F-Series Pickup, Ranger, Windstar.

MERCURY: Grand Marquis, Mystique, Sable, Tracer, Mountaineer, Villager.

LINCOLN: Continental, Mark VIII, Town Car, Navigator.

BUICK: Century, LeSabre, Park Avenue, Regal, Rivera, Skylark.

CHEVROLET: Camaro, Cavalier, Corvette, Geo Metro, Geo Prizm, Lumina, Malibu, Monte Carlo, Astro, Blazer, C/K Series Pickup, Geo Tracker, Express, S-10 Pickup, Tahoe, Venture.

CADILLAC: DeVille, Eldorado, Seville.

GMC: Jimmy, Safari, Savana, Sierra Pickup, Sonoma Pickup, Yukon.

OLDSMOBILE: Achieva, Aurora, Cutlass, Intrigue, Supreme, Eighty-Eight, Bravada, Silhouette.

PONTIAC: Bonneville, Firebird, Grand Am, Grand Prix, Sunfire, Trans Sport.

SATURN: EVI, Saturn.

MAZDA: 626, MX6, B-Series Pickup.

ISUZU: Hombre Pickup. MITSUBISHI: Eclipse, Galant.

NISSAN: Quest. SUZUKI: Swift.

TOYOTA: Corolla, Tacoma Pickup. AM GENERAL: Hummer.

*Listing includes vehicles union-made in U.S. and Canada; some models may have up to 20 percent of assembly in Mexico.

Note: Vehicles from Honda, Hyundai, Nissan (except for Quest), Subaru, Toyota (except for Corolla and Tacoma Pickup), BMW and Volvo either are produced nonunion in the United States or Canada, or manufactured overseas.



ollowing years of infertility and unsuccessful surgeries, Charles and Dawn Marie Restivo chose to explore adoption as means to build their family. Working with a pregnancy crisis center affiliated with their church,

they decided to pursue an "open adoption," in which the birth mother selects the adoptive parents and maintains varying amounts of contact with the adoptive family as the child grows. In 1995, Charles and Dawn Marie traveled from New York to California, arriving in time to see their son, Matthew, born.

For the Restivos, who depended upon their savings to finance the adoption, Restivo's membership in Communications Workers Local 1101 was critical in enabling the couple to afford the adoption and take time off to be present at the birth of their child. Restivo, a service technician at Bell Atlantic/NYNEX. received adoption benefits negotiated by his union-a \$2,500 reimbursement.

In addition to CWA, other unions have addressed adoption benefits in their contracts. SEIU includes two-weeks paid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child and AFSCME Local 11 negotiated with the state of Ohio for four weeks' paid leave for birth or adoption.

Dawn Restivo says adoption benefits made a

need time to adjust and bond with their child as birth parents do.

big difference during this difficult process. "I'm grateful that the CWA bargained for this benefit. It has meant so much to us."

Adoption benefit options

Financial reimbursement is the most widely provided adoption benefit. The Adoption and the Workplace project at the National Adoption Center maintains a database of nearly 500 employers, including unions, that offer reimbursement for adoption expenses. The amount ranges from \$2,000 to \$10,000 per adoption, averaging \$4,000. Often, decision-makers compare the costs of childbirth with the average cost of adoption (\$12,000) when determining the reimbursement.

Paid leave time is another valuable benefit.

After adoption costs, few workers can afford to take unpaid leave. Yet adoptive parents

> The National Adoption Center and the Center for Work and Family recently completed a

study on paid leave and adoption that shows some employers provide paid parental leave while others allow the use of sick leave, vacation or personal time.

Adoption and the Workplace is a resource for employers interested in adding or enhancing adoption benefits. Since the program's inception, more than 100 employers have implemented adoption benefits and nearly 1,000 have requested information or technical assistance.

Another resource is the Labor Project for Working Families, which provides technical assistance to unions on work and family issues, maintains a database of sample contract language and publishes a newsletter. Contact Netzy Firestein, project director, for more information: 510-643-6814. @

-Suzanne Camp

Suzanne Camp, adoption benefits coordinator at the Adoption and the Workplace project, wants to hear from other unions that have included adoption benefits in their contracts, 215-735-9988 ext. 312.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Q. There are very few favorable film or video portrayals of unions and what they do, very few songs that mention union working families and even less art that shows workers. What can be done to change this?

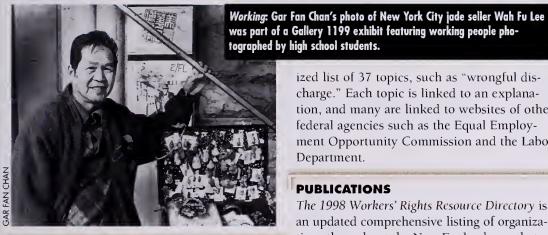
A. The men and women who write the movies and the television shows that we watch are members of a union, the Writers Guild of America. If you see a film or TV show that you like, look for the writer's name

in the credits and send a letter to him or her saying how much you enjoy the show (or film) and suggesting that the writer consider having a union member as a character. Send a letter to any film or TV writer, c/o Writers Guild of America, West, Forwarding Dept., 7000 West 3rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90048.

Q. If I take leave from my job under the Family and Medical Leave Act, can my boss restrict how I spend my time while

A. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period to care for the

employee's child (including a birth, adopted or foster child) or a seriously ill family member, or for the employee's own serious illness. The law applies to businesses with 50 or more employees. Generally, employers with established policies regarding outside employment while on paid or unpaid leave may uniformly apply those policies to employees on FMLA leave. Otherwise, the employer may not restrict your activities. FMLA protections will not cover situations in which the reason for leave no longer exists, where the employee has not provided required notices or medical certifications, or if the employee has misrepresented the reason for leave. For more information, contact your local office of the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division.



ized list of 37 topics, such as "wrongful discharge." Each topic is linked to an explanation, and many are linked to websites of other federal agencies such as the Equal Employ-

ment Opportunity Commission and the Labor

Department.

PUBLICATIONS

A YOUTHFUL PERSPECTIVE ON WORKING

Forty photos taken by New York City high school students depicting family and community members on the job were part of Working, an exhibition at the Bread and Roses Gallery 1199, the only permanent union-based art gallery in the country. The photos were accompanied by the students' essays describing the workers they photographed. The May 20-June 20 exhibit was a cultural project of 1199 National Health and Human Service Employees Union, SEIU.

Gallery 1199 in New York City, features six shows annually. Other Bread and Roses programs include Theater-in-the-Hospitals, which brings prominent actors, singers and dancers to perform at the worksites of 1199 health care members.

WEBSITES FOR WORKERS

Union Jobs Clearinghouse

The Union Jobs Clearinghouse provides a central place to post openings or search for staff. The Concord, Calif.-based service has been endorsed by all of the Bay Area Central Labor Councils and several Building and Construction Trades Councils.

For more information, contact Gary Cortes at 510-671-9274, or e-mail ujc@unionjobs. com. The cost is \$25 per posting per month. If you're looking for an opportunity in the union movement, visit the clearinghouse website at www.unionjobs.com.

New NLRB 'Help Desk'

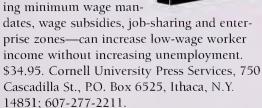
The National Labor Relations Board has added a "help desk" feature to its Internet site, which steers workers with job-related questions to the appropriate federal or state agency for information or assistance. By clicking the help desk button on the NLRB home page (www.nlrb.gov), the viewer gets an alphabet-

The 1998 Workers' Rights Resource Directory is an updated comprehensive listing of organizations throughout the New England area that share a commitment to workers' rights. The directory includes groups involved in immigrant rights, education and interfaith efforts, and provides sections specifically covering environmental and health and safety issues. Copies are \$10. Jobs with Justice, 5 Magazine St., Cambridge, MA 02139; 617-491-2525.

Organizers on Organizing is a quarterly newsletter showcasing interviews with some of the best organizers in the United States and Canada. The editor is Allen H. Kaplan, secretary-treasurer emeritus of AFGE. \$60 per year. Send mail orders to: Suite 401, 3 Wheaton Center, Wheaton, Ill. 60187 or order by phone at 630-682-4251.

Generating Jobs: How to Increase Demand for Less-Skilled Workers examines how wages and employment levels of low-skilled

workers can be improved after three decades of decline. Written by Harvard economist Richard Freeman and Boston College economist Peter Gottschalk, the book explores how well specific policy proposals-including minimum wage man-



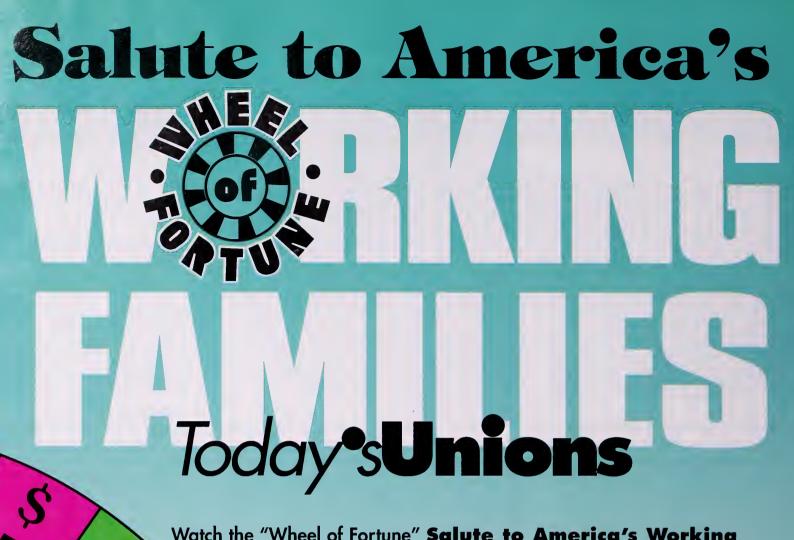
Cutting into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest examines how blue-collar workers shaped the meatpacking industry in the Midwest. Author and anthropologist Deborah Fink bases her work in part on the observations she made while working for four months at the IBP pork processing plant near Perry, Iowa. Through 125 interviews, including 63 from the Iowa Labor History Oral Project, Fink looks at the historical disparity in Iowa's wage labor-between men and women, immigrant and native-born, black, white and Hispanic-differences, Fink says, that have defined the working-class experience in the meatpacking industry. Paperback: \$17.95; cloth: \$45. University of North Carolina Press, 800-848-6224.

On Deadline: Labor Relations in Newspaper Publishing, by Stephen R. Sleigh, highlights case studies of labor relations at the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, Chicago Tribune, Miami Herald and The New York Daily News. Sleigh demon-

strates how newspaper management, willing to bargain in good faith with unions over technological change, are more likely to maintain their readership and profitability during the painful transition to new publishing technologies-and how union-busting strategies nearly destroyed The New York Daily News.

\$17.95. Social Change Press, 38-15 Corporal Kennedy St., Bayside, N.Y. 11361; 718-281-

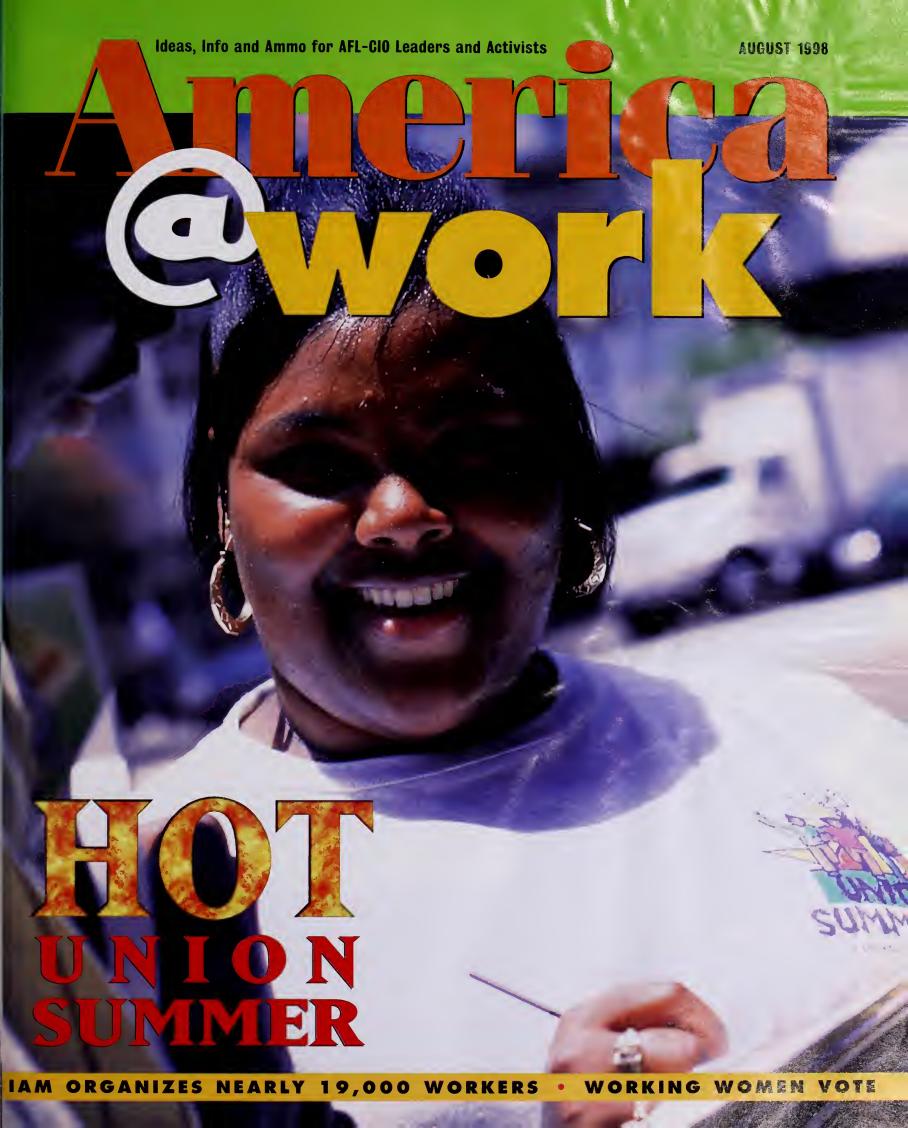
Trends in the Well-Being of American Women, 1970–1995 shows that the progress women have made in gender equality over the past 25 years is not being enjoyed by female high school dropouts. The study, by Cornell University labor economist Francine D. Blau, finds that dropouts' real wages fell 2 percent from 1969 to 1994, compared with a 20 percent increase for college-educated women. At the same time, the study found that 38 percent of female high school dropouts with children were raising them on their own, compared with 13 percent of college graduates. Journal of Economic Literature, March 1998. To order an abstract, e-mail dap5@cornell.edu; write Donna Phoenix, Cornell University, 265 Ives Hall, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853; or call at 607-255-4381.



Watch the "Wheel of Fortune" Salute to America's Working Families the week of Labor Day, September 7–11—featuring union families and union-made prizes.

Let members know that while our message is on the air Labor Day week, the spotlight will be on unions in communities across America. To help your members get the word out, "Wheel of Fortune" Salute to America's Working Families lapel stickers and palm cards are available. These materials are ready for use this summer at Labor Day parades and picnics, state fairs and other activities. To order lapel stickers and palm cards, call 202-637-5227.

Celebrate America's Working Families with "Wheel of Fortune"





Ideas and Views From You

GOV. -OT RAISE, WHY NOT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES?

(a) "St workers want to know when they are going to receive a pay raise now that the Citizens Compensation Commission voted to increase Gov. Pete Wilson's salary a whopping 26 percent....That's handsome compensation for a man who robbed the state pension system to balance the budget and has made it a personal mandate to bust employee unions. State workers have not had a may increase in more than three years. Stagnant wages coupled with inflation have decreased the buying power of our wages by roughly 12 percent. What do we have to do to get a raise?"—Jo Harmon, California State Employees Association/SEIU Local 1000, Middletown, Calif.

ENCOURAGING INFO

(a) "I have picked up a couple issues of America@work when I have taken classes at the George Meany Center in Maryland. I have found the information in it excellent and encouraging (and we can use all we can get of that in this business!)."—Cynthia Phinney, IBEW Local 1837, Manchester, Maine

UAW STRIKE ABOUT AMERICAN JOBS

(a) "I think organized labor is missing an opportunity to bring to mainstream America labor's fight to keep American jobs in America. The UAW's strikes are not about wages or benefits—they're about American jobs. I think the AFL-CIO should today be waging a national public information campaign—in newspapers, on TV and on radio—bringing the "American jobs for American workers" message to everyone"—David A. Fales, IBEW Local 570, Tucson, Ariz.

Say What?

How will your union use "The Union Difference" facts in this issue to get the word out to workers?

America@work 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org



When you see unions@work and our members@work and collective power

communities@work.

in our

that's when you see

HAS SOMETHING GONE TERRIBLY WRONG?

@ "Twenty years ago, fresh out of the military, I went to work for Caterpillar Tractor Co....Unfortunately...the company drastically downsized its union plants and I was laid off. I went back to school and earned three degrees with honors. But unable to find work, I ended up at a local garment factory....Needing a more steady income, I quit and went to work in a nonunion machine shop. I now operate two very complicated and sensitive computer-operated lathes, making Caterpillar parts for \$6.75 an hour with no benefits. To make ends meet, my wife works for another nonunion company during the days, while I work nights, which means we seldom see each other anymore....Is it me or has something gone terribly wrong along the way? Please withhold my name. I need my job. A former UAW and UNITE member (and wish I still was)."-Toluca, Ill.

SAY WHAT?/HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT CHANGING TO ORGANIZE

@ "We have taken the AFL-CIO's message of organizing the unorganized and turned it into practice. One location we organized last year was the janitors who clean Pratt & Whitney's jet engine factory in East Hartford, Conn. About a week after we were recognized, Pratt told the cleaning contractor to part-time all the janitors...their wages [were] slashed by 8 percent and their health insurance eliminated. But we...fought back with a Justice for Janitors campaign.

"The Greater Hartford Labor Council committed resources last year for a staff person who works on Street Heat. Street Heat organized a demonstration [at Pratt's parent company] with over 250 people. Ten leaders from the Connecticut labor movement, the community as well as members of the state legislature were arrested in an act of civil disobedience. We were covered in all five major Connecticut newspapers.

"In April...we ratified a two-year contract which raises workers' wages between 17-23 percent...Street Heat works!"—Kurt Westby, president, SEIU Local 531



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E-moil: otwork@oflcio.org Internet: http://www.oflcio.org





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contents



MACHINISTS FLY TO VICTORY

A HOT UNION SUMMER

Now in its third year, Union Summer gives interns first-hand organizing experience, and creates a pool of talent that more closely mirrors today's labor force



WORKING WOMEN VOTE

A major part of get-out-the-vote efforts is the Working Women Vote '98 campaign, which is reaching out to union and nonunion women around pocketbook issues that affect all families



THE SECRET WAR IN OUR WORKPLACES

Thousands of union members and community supporters in more than 70 cities made their voices heard June 24 to support the right to improve their lives and futures by organizing

Tune into the "Wheel of Fortune"

Salute to America's
Working Families
the week of Labor Day, Sept. 7-11,
featuring union families and
union-made prizes,

THE UNION DIFFERENCE

Organizers and activists need to arm themselves with the facts that show why union members have safer workplaces, better health and retirement benefits, bigger paychecks and a brighter future for their families

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Avondale workers take the fight to the boardroom, equal pay, then and now...

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Working Women Conference 2000 and a new labor movement for the new century



Public Employees Rank High in Trus

hen it comes to public employees, Americans trust their civil servants a heck of a lot more than elected officials—67 percent to 16 percent, according to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.

The approval rating is even higher at some federal agencies with the greatest visibility: 89 percent for Postal Service workers, 85 percent for Park Service employees, 79 percent for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention staff, 76 percent for Defense Department workers, 75 percent for Food and Drug Administration employees, 73 percent for National Aeronautics and Space Administration staff and 70 percent for Federal Aviation Administration workers.

U.S. public employees made up 15.5 percent of all workers in 1995, a figure that trailed the level in other free-market industrialized countries such as Germany (where public employees are 15.9 percent of all workers) and France (24.8 percent).

At the same time, government spending as a percentage of the gross domestic product has been largely stable since 1952, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. Excluding payments for servicing the national debt, which skyrocketed during the Reagan years, discretionary spending in 1997 was the lowest it has been since 1966.

UAW Workers Settle at GM

y huge margins, striking General Motors workers from UAW Locals 651 and 659 in Flint, Mich., ratified a settlement July 29 that challenges the giant automaker to keep its promises about

The two local strikes, which ultimately affected nearly 200,000 workers nationwide over 54 days, were triggered when GM, which sought to cut jobs, removed stamping dies from the Flint Metal Center in the middle of the night. While job security is a local issue, UAW workers at GM plants across the country face similar problems because management "treats everybody the same," UAW Vice President Richard

Shoemaker says. The strikes cost GM more than \$1 billion in lost production and shut down 25 assembly plants and more than 100 parts plants.

Even though the company made \$27 billion in profit since 1993, it still claimed it needed to eliminate 50,000 UAW jobs to become competitive. "Behind every one of those numbers is a face-a worker with a spouse and a family with hopes, dreams and desires," Shoemaker told a July 20 rally in Flint. Local UAW-GM leaders from



Settled: UAW workers won job security, the most critical issue behind the seven-week strike at GM.

across the country came to Flint to rally in support of the strikers. A 67-member unit of UAW Local 2082 in Albany, Ga., donated more than \$4,000 to the strikers.

GM's financial success emboldened the company's management to revert to its old ways of trying to break the union, says UAW President Stephen P. Yokich. "It's teamwork and solidarity that give workers the means to hold companies to their promises, and that's been proven again in this complex and difficult struggle."

SWEATSHOP BUSTING 101

Colleges are taking action to fight sweatshop abuses, following Duke University's tough new anti-sweatshop code of conduct for companies licensed to produce merchandise that bears the Duke logo. After Duke announced its new policy in March, more than a dozen universities, including Cornell, Harvard and Brown, began developing similar codes.

At the same time, the Association of College Licensing Administrators (ACLA) appointed a task force to draft a uniform code that could be used by its 160 members. The ACLA policy will be patterned after the Duke code, which requires that factories be monitored with unannounced visits by

independent observers, and that workers' right to organize be respected.

On most campuses, "it's a student-led issue," says Ginny Coughlin, who heads UNITE's anti-sweatshop campaign. Student interest began to grow after UNITE issued a report in 1997 documenting low wages, abusive treatment and child labor in Dominican Republic sweatshops that make caps bearing college logos.



vondale CEO Al Bossier could learn a thing or two about shareholder rights. At a recent Avondale Industry, Inc. shareholders meeting, four workers who are shareholders tried to present Bossier with a petition asking the company to "obey the law" and negotiate with shipyard workers who organized in 1993. Bossier's response? He called company security guards to throw the workers out, and scrambled to adjourn the meeting in 18 minutes. Outside, union supporters wearing "Justice at Avondale" t-shirts chanted, "We want a contract."

The petition carried 900 names, including those of AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. The company has resisted orders by the National Labor Relations Board to negotiate; the NLRB found the company had violated the law more than 70 times to keep the union out. An administrative law judge ordered Avondale to reinstate workers illegally fired for union activity.

Workers say that at the same time, Avondale has taken action to erode their Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) equity stake by voting to sell off 40 percent of

Avondale stock in a veiled attempt to silence their voice in company policies.

recognition.

"When Mr. Bossier began his quest to take over Avondale from its previous owners, he used \$92 million in employee retirement funds to anchor the transaction," says AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department President John Meese. "Since then, employees and

Overdue: Avondole workers mointoin the fight for union

retirees—some 11,000 are part of the ESOP-have seen their needs and wishes ignored."

Janitors Win Justice in Washington, D.C.

fter a 10-year struggle against some of the most powerful business and political leaders in Washington, D.C., 4,000 janitors won their first-ever master agreement with commercial contractors that clean 70 percent of the city's buildings. The five-year pact "breaks the cycle of low-wage, dead-end jobs and creates a stable work force that provides quality service to the industry," says SEIU President Andrew Stern.

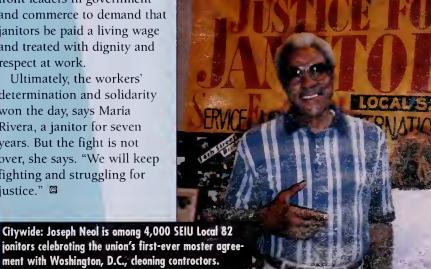
Ratified in June, the contract raises salaries from \$6.50 to \$8 an hour over three years and provides health, retirement and other benefits.

"A high school kid can make it on \$6.50; but how're you going to make a living?" asks Joseph Neal, a Local 82 janitor.

When the campaign was launched in Washington, D.C., in 1987, fewer than 1 percent of the city's janitors belonged to a union. Today, 70 percent are SEIU Local 82 members. The janitors' ongoing struggle for justice was punctuated with drama, including widely publicized demonstrations that blocked the city's bridges during rush hour. The AFL-CIO and affiliated unions joined Local 82 members

in rallies and marches to confront leaders in government and commerce to demand that janitors be paid a living wage and treated with dignity and respect at work.

Ultimately, the workers' determination and solidarity won the day, says Maria Rivera, a janitor for seven years. But the fight is not over, she says. "We will keep fighting and struggling for iustice."



SPOTLIGHT

CLUW Acts Against NOMFSTIC VIOLENCE

or many victims of domestic violence, the workplace is an eight-hour safe haven. It also can be a good place to seek help if unions and employers are trained to offer assistance to women who are victims of abuse.

More than 150 members of the Coalition of Labor Union Women gathered in Washington, D.C., June 10 to learn ways of taking action to prevent domestic abuse. The conference, "Ending Violence Against Women: Union Strategies For Action," was held in conjunction with CLUW's executive board meeting.



pping the violence: Cothy Collette, heod of SCME's tosk force on violence ogainst women, ht, tolks with CLUW member Cynthio McCoughn OPEIU, center, and Bonnie Compbell, director of Deportment of Justice's Office of Violence

"Domestic violence is a union issue," says CLUW President Gloria Johnson, IUE social action department director, "and union stewards are often called in to help." Union stewards and company personnel such as security guards and counselors should be trained to deal with domestic violence and sensitive to the needs of battered women workers, she says.

CLUW members around the country are creating lists of resources for domestic violence victims and posting them in restrooms and public places. CLUW members also are working to make strong contract language-such as company-paid legal assistance for abused women, appropriate leaves of absence, changes in shifts or work locations and paid time off to attend court hearings—a key goal in negotiations.

"We hope this conference and the things that came out of it will be a model for conferences around the country for labor unions to discuss the issue." Johnson says.

Currents

EQUAL PAY— Then and Now

n 1963, Evy Dubrow, as head of the legislative department at the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (now UNITE), was among a handful of participants at a White House bill signing ceremony when President John F. Kennedy etched the Equal Pay Act into law. The act, which aims to end the practice of paying men and women different wages for the same work, was passed at a time when women made 59 cents for every dollar a man earned. In June, Dubrow, now special assistant to the president at UNITE, was back at the White House, this time to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, celebrate how far women have come-and acknowledge how far they have to go. "I think a lot of the younger people got a sense of how historic the occasion was," Dubrow says, noting that she and National Council of Negro Women president emeritus Dorothy Height, also at the ceremony, are both alumnae of the original signing.

In a ceremony attended by President Clinton, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and union and community veterans of the pay equity struggle, Tipper Gore read from postcards sent to the AFL-CIO from women across the country who shared their concerns about the pay gap. Women today earn 74 cents, on average, for every dollar a man earns—a difference that translates to \$523,000 over the career of the average 25-year-old working women.

In the 1997 "Ask a Working Woman" survey conducted by the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department, women cited equal pay as their number one concern. Recognizing that if women were paid what they were worth, both they and their families would benefit, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and Senate Minority Leader Thomas Daschle (D-S.D.) are backing a bill that would better enforce the law, educate employers and workers about equal pay issues and recognize employers that provide equal pay. The AFL-CIO plans to continue pressuring state legislatures—

such as West Virginia, which recently enacted a pay equity law for state workers—to ensure economic justice for working women and their families.

A new section of the AFL-CIO website, accessible in September, will enable women to calculate their losses over a lifetime of work due to the pay gap (www.aflcio.org/women/equalpay).



Equal pay anniversary: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson welcomes UNITE's Evy Dubrow, who attended the 1963 Equal Pay Act signing at the Kennedy White House.

ORGANIZING

ALPA The 250 pilots and flight engineers who work for Tower Air in New York voted in June to join the Air Line Pilots. The crews fly a fleet of 17 B747s for the passenger, charter and cargo operation.

BCT Three Building and Construction Trades unions gained 161 workers at White Eagle Concrete in Las Vegas. The unions are the Carpenters, Laborers and Plasterers and Cement Masons.

Carpenters Some 100 industrial workers at a Georgia Pacific sawmill in Columbia, Miss., voted to join the Carpenters' Southern Council of Industrial Workers June 23. The workers will join with other union members in coordinated bargaining.

CWA The 6,300-member Connecticut Union of Telephone Workers (CUTW), which represents employees of Southern New England Telephone, voted to merge with CWA in June.

HERE Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 27 won card check recognition for 157 workers at APCOA Standard, a parking garage company in Washington, D.C. In Southfield, Mich., 118 workers at the Westin Hotel voted for Local 24.

IBT Teamsters won the right to represent 135 medical assistants, technicians, receptionists and other workers at Mullikin Medical Partners in Tracy, Calif.

IUPA South Carolina is a notorious "right-to-work" state. But now the 150 police officers in Greenville, one of its largest cities, are represented by IUPA Local 10 after an election win in June.

OPEIU The 11,000-member Clinical Social Work Federation—a professional association representing mental health counselors in 31 state societies—voted to affiliate in July. Some 640 employees at Providence General Medical Center in Everett, Wash., voted for Local 8 in June. More than 300 nurses at Rutland, Vt., Regional Medical

Center voted for representation by OPEIU Local 6.

SEIU 1199 National Health and Human Service Employees, SEIU, added 1,100 new members at Good Samaritan Hospital in Suffern, N.Y. Local 100 gained 778 public employees in Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge, La., in June. Poor working conditions drove 250 school bus drivers at Vancom/Laidlaw in Gary, Ind., to vote for Local 1.

UAW At the University of California-San Diego, student academic employees voted overwhelmingly, 116-41, for the Association of Student Employees/UAW, which represents a majority of students across the UC system's eight campuses. Some 180 members of the Matoon (Ill.) Education Support Personnel Association also voted to join.

UNITE Workplace pressure, an unfair bonus system and seniority issues led 460 workers at Levi Strauss' Mountain City, Tenn., plant to vote in June for representation.

Beverly Attacks Free Speech

A bipartisan congressional delegation will file a friend-of-thecourt brief supporting Kate Bronfenbrenner, Cornell University Labor Education

Research director. Last year, Beverly Enterprises sued Bronfenbrenner alleging defamation for her remarks at a congressional town hall meeting where she said her research showed the nursing home giant was a "notorious labor law violator."

The suit was dismissed last May, but Beverly has appealed to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, where the congressional amicus brief will be filed, says Rep. Lane Evans (D-Ill.), who is gathering signatures for the brief.

Shortly after the dismissal, Bronfenbrenner was interviewed on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" where she said she had "told the truth" about Beverly. Beverly then filed another suit over those remarks. That suit also was dismissed.

In both suits, Beverly sought the documents on which Bronfenbrenner based her findings. Researchers and academics feared that Beverly was using its suit to intimidate future research. More than 500 professors signed an e-mail petition to Beverly, calling the suit an attack on academic freedom.

Detroit Workers Celebrate Unity on Third Anniversary

early 400 union members marked the third anniversary of the Detroit newspaper strike with a special "home delivery" for newspaper owners.

A 200-car "Caravan for Justice" drove through the neighborhoods of key officials of the Detroit Free Press, Detroit News and the Detroit Newspaper Agency, and striking workers performed street theater in front of the home of Frank Vega, CEO of the newspaper agency. The caravan also made news as it drove through downtown Detroit, past a crowd of 250,000 onlookers at "Thunder Fest," a Gold Cup boat race.

"It's too bad that you have to celebrate an anniversary such as this, but it was a celebration of solidarity," says Shawn Ellis of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, which represents the locked-out workers.

The striking workers continue to get the word out that the

newspapers, which are appealing unfair labor practice rulings, have refused to return them to work in a timely fashion as ordered by an administrative law judge.

The message is getting through, Ellis says. The circulation of the combined Sunday edition of the Gannett-owned News and the Knight Ridder-owned Free Press dropped to 461,000 from a high of 750,000 before the strike, and local advertisers have decreased their spending by 40 percent.

The strike began July 13, 1995 when more than 2,000 workers walked out after their contract expired and the company refused to back off demands for drastic job reductions, givebacks on health care and shifting some full-time jobs to part-time. They offered to return unconditionally in February 1997, but the papers only took back a few workers, refusing to fire nonunion workers hired during the strike. Negotiations will resume in August.

OUT FRONT

n June 24, our members-and those who are struggling to become membersbegan re-introducing America to the reasons workers need and fight so hard to become part of today's unions (see page 16). As our country takes a moment to celebrate the triumphs and honor the dignity of working people this Labor Day, we have a new opportunity to reinforce the message of today's unions and take it to more of our neighbors, community groups, allied organizations and elected officials. Here are a few ideas for putting together Labor Day events:

 Coordinate with the national Interfaith Committee for Worker

Justice or your local committee affiliate, and with central labor councils and local unions on Labor Day weekend worship services that focus on the right to organize as a key to justice for working people.

• Plan a community forum to showcase the stories of local workers, showing why the right to join a union is critical to their families and the community. Shine a light on employers that hire union-busting consultants, force workers to endure mandatory anti-union meetings and refuse to bargain once workers have made their choice. Celebrate employers that respect workers' decision to join a union.

• Share stories that workers told at June 24 events in your area with local media, community groups and elected officials. (Get workers' permission before distributing the stories.)

• Build a speakers' bureau of workers who can speak to local religious, women's, environmental and civil rights groups, and who can provide comments to the media about what Labor Day means to working families. Include workers who took part in June 24 activities.

• Use your Labor Day picnic, parade or other event to get out the word about the good today's unions do-in the workplace, in your community and in our country. Distribute Today's Unions stickers, palm cards and brochures.

• Submit op-eds to local newspapers about what workers gain from union membership and the tactics employers use to stop them. While local media are focusing greater attention on unions because of the holiday, spend some one-on-one time with reporters.

• Take part in a Labor '98 town hall meeting on Working Families Agenda issues, such as health care, education and Social Security.

• Arrange or join a Wheel of Fortune "Salute to America's Working Families" viewing party. During Labor Day week, "America's game show" will feature union families as contestants and union-made prizes. Distribute palm cards and stickers reminding your friends and neighbors to watch.

Materials from the AFL-CIO that will help include the Communities@work: A Guide to Restoring Our Right to Organize manual; Together We Can Make Our Voices Heard booklet; America Works Better When Workers Have a Voice booklet; It's Time to Shine a Light brochure; Today's Unions palm cards, stickers and brochures; Wheel of Fortune palm cards and brochures; and the Union Difference area on our website (www.aflcio.org). For more information, call 202-637-5018. To order materials, call 202-637-5042.

To all my brothers and sisters, and to your working families, happy Labor Day.



MAKE WORKERS'

THIS LABOR DAY

VOICES HEARD

By John J. Sweeney



THE WINNING TICKET:

United Airlines Workers Join Machinists

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

The Machinists soared to success with the largest private-sector organizing victory in 20 years. On July 17, IAM won a 16-month drive at United Airlines among nearly 19,000 reservation agents and passenger service workers nationwide—the last major group of the air carrier's employees lacking a full say in their workplace.

The election was a blockbuster in many ways. Not since 1978, when the Steelworkers organized 19,000 employees at the Newport News shipyards, have so many private-sector workers come together into a union. IAM's victory marks the largest unionization vote in airline history. The new members join 42,000 other IAM-represented employees at United.

Marshaling a network of high-tech communication tools and harnessing the organizing talents of union workers at United, IAM built support worker by worker, in 113 cities, 16 reservation centers and dozens of ticket offices.

"This election reflects the new spirit of

today's union movement," says IAM President Thomas Buffenbarger. "It's a tremendous accomplishment."

Two-tier wages

Reservationists and passenger service workers at United were more than ready to fight back after four years of unfair treatment.

In 1994, United became an employee-owned company after workers agreed to cut their wages in exchange for job security and a stake in the airline. However, the company's prior management imposed the terms of the buyout on nonunion employees. Without union repre-

sentation, the workers didn't have a say in decisions about the employee stock ownership plan. As a result, they received lower pay and fewer benefits than their union counterparts, including pilots, flight attendants and IAM members such as mechanics, ramp workers, dispatchers, food service workers and guards.

Before the buyout, newly hired nonunion employees could earn as much as \$18 an hour after 10 years of service, get up to seven weeks of vacation and health benefits. But nonunion workers hired after the buyout—so-called "C-scale" employees—earned less money (\$8.72 an

hour after five years), got less vacation and no medical benefits.

"The company proved with the stock ownership plan and pay scales that they could no Flying high: When the votes were counted on July 17, Machinists won an election for nearly 19,000 reservation agents and passenger service workers—the largest privatesector organizing victory in 20 years.



longer be trusted," says Debbie Batchelor, a 14-year reservationist from Seattle who was active in the organizing drive. New employees couldn't get by on what they were earning, while veteran workers had high health care co-payments and no pension guarantees. But for Batchelor and others, the bottom line was job security—especially after United shifted some reservation jobs to Mexico and Dublin, Ireland. "IAM people have security," she says. But the same was not true for nonunion United workers.

"We've all seen what management did for nonunion employees during negotiations over employee ownership: lower wages, lower stock options, a loss of personal holidays," adds Kathleen Domzalski, a Buffalo, N.Y., customer service representative, in a posting on the organizing committee's website. "What's next, a D-scale?"

"They created a workforce of haves and have-nots," says Beth Lowe, a ticket agent.

As more and more workers were hired, indignation over the wage structure grew. When it was first put into place for new hires, not many people were affected by it, notes Bill Upton, IAM spokesman. Soon enough though, "people got a first-hand experience of what happens" when they don't have a voice in their workplace, Upton says. "People saw that without a union, the company can come in and make unilateral changes in pay and benefits. People are realizing that companies are willing to take things away."

The two-tier system also led to friction and high turnover because workers were not getting the same pay for doing the same job. "Every week, we get reports on how much revenue we generate," says Batchelor. "They are sitting next to me and I'm making \$17 an hour—while the starting salary now is \$6.65."

Recent hires making lower wages left for more lucrative work at other—often unionized—airlines. Meanwhile, more seasoned employees found their workloads increased because of the high turnover. "Nine years ago it was stable, but now people come and go," says Lowe. Working as a ticket agent "is a hard job and people can go elsewhere. We have so many new people and we have to compensate. It's hard to learn. It slows the place down. It makes your job a lot harder."

When they looked around, they saw that the union members fared better.

Lowe didn't have to look far. Her husband also works at United, where he is an IAM member. "There was a big difference," she says. "We just got whatever was left over because we weren't represented" in negotiations setting employee-ownership provisions.

"In good times, the company treated us well," says Batchelor. "But when they wanted to make more profit, they took things away from the nonunion employees." A first closs compoign: A two-tier woge ond benefit scale fueled on organizing momentum that ultimately relied on one-on-one contact for success.

"We are tired of being the neglected stepchild," says Rick

Boyd, who works at Dulles International Airport outside Washington, D.C.

Although United is employee-owned, nonunion workers "weren't really owners, we were tenant sharecroppers," unable to share equitably in the benefits, says Sallie Thiessen, a Seattle reservationist. "Even in an employee-owned company, workers need unions to ensure they have an effective voice in dealing with management," says AFL-CIO President Sweeney.

Although officially the company stayed neutral in the organizing campaign, it did have captive audience meetings. Many pro-union workers seeking a voice at the table, also were committed to the company. "We can make this the top airline because if you give people a fair share, they produce for you like crazy," adds Batchelor. "I told people, 'you will be so proud to be in the union because it will make the airline better.""



IAM already has a plan to follow up on the biggest union victory in two decades with an organizing campaign among 8,000 ramp workers at Continental Airlines—while negotiating a contract that will ensure the new IAM members a voice on the job.

As Lowe puts it, "Now, we feel we're going to have a say."



Organizing 19,000 workers in a nationwide campaign calls for detailed planning, coordination and regular communication. But ultimately, it depends on the same basic principle of every successful organizing campaign: one-on-one contact.

Worker contact: The presence of union members at the airline was the key to building support, says Jim Conley, IAM's assistant airline coordinator. "They go to the same McDonald's, walk by the same gates and go to the same break rooms," he says, where they could spread the word about the benefits of union membership. In remote rural locations, IAM members in the railroad industry helped with outreach, Conley says. And the Air Line Pilots and Flight Attendants wrote letters of support.

The Internet: Another key was keeping information flowing freely—no easy task in a nation-wide effort. The organizing campaign set up its own website (www.iamnow.org) and filled its pages with press releases, photos and testimonials from workers around the country, a weekly election summary, a screen to submit comments and questions, a section on questions and answers about the election and the IAM, handbills that could be downloaded, sample provisions from IAM contracts with other airlines—and even an online authorization card.

The Internet was a good fit for this campaign because it was a particularly computer-savvy workforce. And even though not everyone had access to a computer, "There were enough people online that they could bring the materials to work with them," says IAM spokesman Bill Upton.

Conference calls: Every Sunday evening, the top national organizers conducted four large conference calls with members of the in-house committees. "They kept us informed about issues we needed to address and what came up at company meetings we needed to rebut," says IAM's Conley. The conference calls were a new addition to the union's strategy, which it didn't use in 1991, the last time IAM tried to organize at United. "When we lost, we realized we needed more communication," acknowledges Debbie Batchelor, a Seattle reservationist who was instrumental in both efforts.

Direct mail: Another prong of the communication strategy was informational mailings—and lots of them. "We bombarded them with information once or twice a week," says Conley. "Brilliant" is how Sallie Thiessen, a reservationist in Seattle, describes the union's direct mail campaign. "They got information into our homes. They sent a lot, much more than before," she says. In fact, Thiesson says the sheer volume of mail convinced an initially anti-union colleague to vote union.

The IAM also created videos and provided a toll-free hotline. But in the end, the union relied primarily on "plain, old-fashioned organizing," says Conley. "Nothing takes the place of one-on-one contact."





ike most teenagers, Keyasha Lawrence spends a lot of time on the phone. But this summer, she doesn't expect to be gabbing with her girlfriends. The phones she eyes expectantly are the

ones used by union organizers bent on improving the working conditions for the 16,000 housekeepers, waiters and other hotel employees in New Orleans. She's there to help them as part of Union Summer, the AFL-CIO internship program for aspiring organizers.

Eighteen-year-old Lawrence admits she is looking forward to calling workers to remind them of meetings, "because I like talking on the phone." The New Orleans native has just graduated from high school and plans to attend a local university. She's considering several careers: anaesthesiologist, physical therapist, social worker. But, "If I like this, maybe I'll become an organizer," she says. "I might do this for the rest of my life."

By building on young people's sense of justice, Union Summer organizers hope to bring new energy into the union movement. Now in its third year, the program seeks to tap the

enthusiasm of activists, placing 300 of them in three separate four-week sessions nationwide this summer, including Cleveland; Denver; Fox Valley, Wis.; Los Angeles; the Saginaw-Flint, Mich., area; Washington, D.C.; and Watsonville, Calif. In addition to hands-on organizing efforts in Watsonville, Union Summer interns are participating in public actions in support of strawberry workers in six major cities. For a weekly stipend of \$210, the interns will spend four weeks in an intense educational experience, filled with hands-on activities, including leafleting workers, making house calls, helping run community meetings,

learning the history of the labor and civil rights movements and working closely with other activists from around the country.

While Union Summer puts more troops on the ground in organizing campaigns and fights for first contracts, the program gives the interns first-hand learning experience, hones skills students can take back to their campuses and creates a pool of talent that more closely mirrors today's labor force. Last year, 57 percent of Union Summer interns were women and 60 percent people of color. Many Union Summer graduates go on to work as organizers and other union staff; others work with community organizations and return to college campuses to form or revitalize student–labor action committees.

"Students were excited to go back to their campuses and spread the message. It makes them realize there is hope and that we can be part of it," says Kate Keller, a 1996 Union Summer intern. "They may have 17 doors slammed in their faces, but then comes that one person who will sit down and talk to them about their workplace. That makes them feel so good." Keller was tapped to be an assistant coordinator following her Union Summer experience in Detroit, and has become the 1998 Washington, D.C. site coordinator.

The program is instrumental in raising the awareness of would-be organizers who range in age from 18 to 29 of issues facing workers. No previous knowledge of the labor movement is required for participation in Union Summer, says AFL-CIO Assistant Education Department Director Tony Sarmiento, Union Summer director. "We look for a sense of justice and

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

whether applicants have acted on it in the past, along with a recognition of the need for collective action, as opposed to looking for individual solutions," he says.

No short supply of injustice

The New Orleans hospitality industry—where several of Lawrence's relatives work—offers no short supply of injustice. One in six New Orleans residents is employed in the city's \$4 billion tourism industry. But while the city's hotels are among the most profitable, the workers, most of them African American, are among the worst paid in the nation.

At an average of \$105, a night's stay at a New Orleans hotel is the fifth most expensive in the country—even though the cost of doing business there is one of the lowest. Hotels in New Orleans are as successful as those in other big cities such as New York, Boston and San Francisco. Yet housekeepers earn an average of \$9.21 an hour in those cities (unionized workers earn more, an average of \$15.24 in New York, for instance). By contrast, New Orleans service workers are paid \$5.48 an hour-wages so low that many workers need government assistance to get by. During the course of their internship, Lawrence and her colleagues met many workers who work full time, yet still qualify for food stamps.

"I live right here and didn't know half the things going on," Lawrence says.

HOTROC campaign

The Union Summer interns in New Orleans are working with HOTROC, the Hospitality, Hotels and Restaurants Organizing Council, a coalition of HERE, Operating Engineers and SEIU. Since it was formed last year, HOTROC already has organized some 650 workers at the city's convention center.

HOTROC's office stands just outside the city's historic French Quarter. Inside, the air conditioner is set just cool enough to prevent the 16 interns from melting amid swampy, record-breaking June heat. Staff organizers are putting together a meeting with local politicians to press for better wages and benefits as a condition for the profitable hotels to be granted public subsidies. During Union Summer's first week in New Orleans, the interns were charged with boosting turnout for a planning meeting, helping run that meeting and getting workers to show up for the follow-up gathering with politicians.

That means a 6 a.m. leafleting blitz outside downtown hotels, followed by another one later in the afternoon.

Earlier in the day, senior organizer Dave Kieffer has given the Union Summer activists their marching orders. He stresses the need to be thoroughly convincing. "We want the work-

DAVID RAE MORRIS/IMPACT VISUALS

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ers to own the message and own the decision" to attend the next meeting, he says.

Interns are instructed to sign in guests, sit with them throughout the presentation, get them to commit to come to the next meeting and leaflet their neighborhoods, congregations and workplaces. "You have to push people to make the maximum commitment," Kieffer tells them. "Don't take no for an answer."

As the meeting begins, workers stream into the meeting hall, where gospel music fills the air and ceiling fans slice through the heat. Standing in front of about 120 workers, many with children in tow, three organizers in quick succession tape up charts demonstrating the gap between what the hotels make and what the workers earn. While the New Orleans hotel industry is prospering, the average hotel worker's salary is \$10,000 a year-below the poverty line for a family of three—and wages are either going down or staying the same. A majority of workers feel they are treated unfairly. Fully 90 percent say they need an organization; 80 percent of those say they would participate in a workplace organization. Together they brainstorm on what makes a good job: a living wage, affordable medical insurance, dignity at the workplace, paid leave, job security, pensions.

Still, it's hard to get workers to raise their hands when organizers ask for volunteers to leaflet their neighborhoods, or talk with their ministers and fellow employees. Then, an older woman who works at the Superdome, where workers are contesting a union vote they lost, stands up. "I don't know what you all are afraid of," she says matter-of-factly.

With that, the Union Summer interns fan out

with clipboards, getting commitments and talking with workers on the way back to their cars. By the end of their second day in New Orleans, the interns have seen both the organizers and the workers in

Working for justice: More than 5,000 union members and their supporters marched with AFL-CIO President Jahn Sweeney and AFT President Sandra Feldman in July ta suppart New Orleans hatel warkers in their effarts ta win a living wage.

Paverty wages: Nursing student Tranessa Hunter gets set to talk with workers in New Orleans where, despite a booming hotel industry, the average hotel worker's salary is \$10,000 a year—belaw the paverty line for a family of three.

action. And they've taken their first steps in helping workers improve their lives. "People got the job done and you should be proud," Louis Jamerson, HOTROC's field director, tells them.

The backbone of organizing

The interns next take part in what often is the backbone of an organizing campaign: making house calls. "You get to see how the workers actually live," AFL-CIO organizer DaLinda Fermin tells them. "There is no substitute for a house call. You will see a change in the worker. Agitating is the fun part. It turns fear into anger."

Ready or not, a day and a half later, Lawrence is "on the doors" with Richard Schwartz, an organizer with SEIU's southern region. The drive takes them through neighborhoods of tiny, closely packed houses with peeling paint and crumbling porches, and a wide boulevard of stately homes guarded by majestic columns. Farther on: a tent set up for an old-fashioned revival meeting and the city's legendary graveyards with their ornate aboveground crypts. But the unionists' destination is a boxy red brick housing project, where they find themselves interrupting a hotel housekeeper doing her hair. Still, she's willing to talk with Lawrence and Schwartz.

The housekeeper says she is fairly happy at her job. It's better than the last two hotels she's worked at, she says, even if it pays only \$5.50 an hour. She steadfastly refuses to take fliers to distribute at work advertising the upcoming meeting, explaining that she keeps to herself. Back in the car, the two analyze why they met with only limited success. Lawrence guesses that the woman's rent is probably affordable—she used to live in similar low-income housing herself—which would explain why she's content with such low pay.

The day before, Schwartz made house calls



with Tranessa Hunter, a New Orleans native and a nursing student. Hunter's open and engaging manner already has made her a hit on the leafleting circuit. Still, she's apprehensive about making house calls. "I'm just a little worried that I won't know what to say," she admits, kicking her chair nervously.

At one house, Hunter's confidently delivered introduction gets them in the door. Sitting on plush blue sofas, they await a hotel worker out on an errand. The worker's friend watches TV, and three small children, still in their school uniforms, play with a deck of cards strewn on a linoleum floor. After the worker, who is employed in conventions services, arrives, Schwartz gradually draws out her story: She admits she was the leader of an aborted wildcat walkout. She describes the time her supervisors wouldn't let her take even a short break after cleaning up six inches of convention confetti on the ballroom floor, typical of the disrespect she says workers are shown. Not only does she promise to come to the upcoming meeting, she gives the organizers names and phone numbers of other likely activists at her workplace. On the way out, the woman admires Hunter's elaborate hair style. Hunter offers a few pointers about salons and beauty supply stores, a conversation that bonds the two on issues beyond the workplace.

Outside, Schwartz is quietly triumphant. "That was the best house call I've had in months," he says.

Student activists

At 25, Hunter is older than many of the Union Summer interns. Her last involvement in activism, she says, came 10 years ago, when she joined other teenagers to picket and ultimately shut down a local cinema that offered moviegoers torn seats and rats running in the aisles. The oldest member of this Union Summer crew is Billy Wharton, 29. He's something of a godsend since he's one of the few people old enough to rent a car-and thus drive the van that ferries the interns. Wharton left college and followed in the footsteps of his father and an uncle, working on the stock exchange first as a phone clerk and then as a trader. "So I saw how capital works to exploit people," he says. "After five years, I walked in one day, turned in my badge and went back to school." Now at City University of New York's Staten Island campus, Wharton has served as student body president and has been active in the high-profile battles over admissions policies.

But even the youngest Union Summer interns have impressive organizing credentials. Nineteen-year-old Sam Bain worked on an anti-sweatshop campaign and helped support clerical workers on strike as a founding member of Students for a Fair Contract at Colum-

organizing campaigns and fights for first contracts, gives interns first-hand organizing experience, hones skills students can take back to their campuses and creates a pool of talent that more closely mirrors today's labor force: Last year, 57 percent of Union Summer interns were women and 60 percent were people of color.

bia University, where he's just finished his first year. Stacey Allen, 18, graduated from high school a week before Union Summer started, but she already has experience organizing health care workers with her mother, a union activist with SEIU Local 250 in the Bay area. As part of a senior project, Stacey polled her classmates to identify their top concern about school—which, they agreed, was violence—and then came up with a plan to combat it.

After four days, Lawrence hasn't decided yet if the life of a union organizer is for her. But

she's mastered the union movement's bottom line: solidarity. When Schwartz asks her if just one person can make a difference in a workplace, she says, "No."

"How about two?" he quizzes further.

"No," she says.

"Well, then how many does it take?"

"A whole bunch of them," she says.
For more information about Union Summer, contact Tony Sarmiento at 800-952-2550 or tsarmien@aflcio.org. Visit the website at www.unionsmr.org

Union Summer 'Graduate' Looks Back

Christopher Auten, a member of UAW Local 900 in Wayne, Mich., was one of 500 interns selected for the 1997 Union Summer program. The following are excerpts from Auten's reflections on his experience.

In 1997, I took a month-long leave of absence from Ford Motor Co. to take part in the greatest union organizing training available: I was assigned to St. Louis, Mo., for the third wave of Union Summer, July 25–August 18.

The first assignment was to work on the Strawberry Workers campaign with the United Farm Workers and a group called Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition. I helped organize citywide actions, leaflets and pickets. I also wrote and expedited press releases, was a

guest on the cable show "Labor Vision" and spoke at a variety of union meetings throughout the Greater St. Louis area.

I then worked with the Teamsters Local 688 to support their public awareness campaign in the strike against UPS, and helped organize a coalition of social activists, clergy, labor leaders and the public in support of striking Teamsters.

During these three-and-a-half stress-filled weeks, we also worked with AFSCME, organizing a petition drive for District Council 31, which was still fighting for a first contract after three years; SEIU Local 880, which is organizing home health care nurses; ACORN, a community group that fights to improve neighborhoods through community involvement; and UNITE, which is organizing the garment and clothing industry to eliminate child labor and sweatshop conditions in America and abroad.

My entire Union Summer experience was the best that a union activist could expect. Not only did it prepare me to be an organizer, but it also gave me the opportunity to meet many dedicated and inspiring people. I met representatives from USWA, IAM, CWA, IBT, IBEW and like-minded groups. Each talked to me about their struggles and gains. It made me look at our struggles and gains within the UAW.

We cannot forget what it takes to get that first union election, or that first contract after a union has been organized. We must constantly remember our struggles while we continue to organize new members and educate our membership.

We must aggressively continue to educate ourselves while we organize the next generation of labor.



CRAING

When big corporations and right-wing extremists tried to silence working families in California with Proposition 226 in June, working women voted, and the women who went to the polls cast their ballots to kill Prop. 226 by a 55-45 percent margin. Male voters were evenly divided.

In 1996, when working families fought back against the likes of Newt Gingrich and his congressional cronies who tried to derail a minimum wage hike, slash Medicare and education spending and gut workplace safety laws, working women voted. They backed candidates who stood for working families at a rate 17 percentage points higher than men.

BY MIKE HALL

This fall, stakes are high again, and working women again can make the difference. In Senate races, a gain of only five seats by antiworker candidates would make legislation such as the Team Act, paycheck deception and OSHA deform filibuster-proof. Working family priorities such as good jobs with fair wages, affordable health care, strong pension protections, quality child care and education would not stand a chance. On the other hand, if working families head to the polls, a switch of 11 House seats would dismantle Gingrich's anti-worker majority.

"Prop. 226 and the 1996 results show that by voting, working women can make a significant difference," says Karen Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department. "How we vote in 1998 will decide who wins and who loses. This is our chance to tell the politicians what's important to us."

Getting out the union vote-and the working women vote-will determine whether working families' issues are part of the political discussion. Off-year elections traditionally are marked by low voter turnout, and conservative Republican strategists are counting on that because their core voters almost always go to the polls. The same has not always been true for working families and their allied groups. About 5.2 million union members, including about 2 million women, are not registered to vote. Organizers from the AFL-CIO and affiliated unions are working with local unions and



issues are part of the political discussion.

central labor councils to register union members to vote. They are visiting worksites, speaking at union meetings and joining with community allies to help devise strategies to make sure working families make their political voice heard. A major component of the getout-the-vote effort is the AFL-CIO's Working Women Vote '98 campaign. As in 1996, Working Women Vote will reach out to union and nonunion women around pocketbook issuesissues that affect all families.

Come November, polls conducted by Peter D. Hart Research for the AFL-CIO show, union and nonunion working women are likely to stand up for candidates who back the AFL-CIO Working Families Agenda-if they get to the polls. Women support:

Quality, affordable health care. Seventy-two percent of women believe that the inability of families to afford quality health care is a serious problem in this country. A majority of men do too, but by a smaller 60 percent.

Strengthened Social Security and expanded pension coverage. Ninety-three percent of women want to make it easier for workers to continue their pension coverage when they change jobs, and 91 percent say protecting and bolstering Social Security is a top priority.

Good jobs and good wages. On average, women earn just 74 percent of men's wages, and 91 percent of women say they want to strengthen laws to ensure equal pay.

Workers' right to organize. Seventy-nine



Yes! I want to receive the Working Women Vote '98 Action Packet that includes a "Working Women Vote" button, poster and five fliers.

| Name: | |
|--------|--------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Union: | Local: |
| Phone: | |
| | |
| Emails | |

Yes! I want to talk to workers, neighbors and other members of my community about getting working women to vote. Call me and let me know what I can do.

Mail this coupon to the Working Women's Department, AFL-CIO, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, or call 202-508-6902 for your Working Women Vote '98 Action Packet.

percent of women who do not yet belong to a union believe that joining together in the workplace is a better way to solve problems than acting individually.

Available, affordable child care: Sixty-two percent of working women with children younger than six believe child care is an important workplace issue, but only 13 percent get child care from their jobs, according to the 1997 AFL-CIO Ask a Working Woman poll.

In 1996, some 35,000 activists helped stage 300 events that reached millions of women in 46 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, encouraging them to stand up for working families on Election Day. The goal of Working Women Vote '98 is to reach out to even more potential voters.

To get women to the polls, union activists know they have to:

• Reinforce for working women how the November 3 outcome will determine the future of their families and the security of their jobs.

The AFL-CIO and its affiliate unions are planning hundreds of local activities to register working women and encourage them to go to the polls—from summer picnics to union conferences and political rallies.

To help make sure working women vote:

- Contact the Working Women's Department—202-637-5064—for materials, tips and names of community allies.
 - · Register working women in day care cen-

ters, grocery stores, airports, business districts and workplaces. Talk to working women about the issues—affordable, quality health care, equal pay and the right to organize. You can do this on work breaks or at lunch.

• Wear a "Working Women Vote" button people will ask you about it. Make sure Working Women Vote posters are a part of any event you host between now and Election Day.

• Distribute fliers and other information on working family issues through your local union, central labor council and other organizations. If your state has early voting or absentee ballots, get them to working women whose home and work duties might make it difficult to get to the polls on Election Day.

Getting Out the Vote

Union leaders and community activists looking to get out the vote among working women this election year can take a page from Working Women Vote '96 events:

Conduct worksite visits. Contacting union members at the worksite is one of the most effective ways to get their support for issues critical to working families. In Knoxville, Tenn., the UFCW held "We're Sewing Up the Vote" meetings at Levi Strauss Co. plants, as did UNITE at the Hathaway Shirt Co. in Maine. In the Washington, D.C. area, OPEIU Local 2 registered 500 new voters in one week through worksite visits and political education programs.

Focus on issues. Stress key issues, such as children's health care, to demonstrate the link between voting and working families' priorities. The Southern Nevada Central Labor Council kicked off a month-long get-out-the-vote campaign with a rally outside the local children's clinic.

Look for media opportunities. Building on current fads—like the Macarena dance craze of 1996—is one media-catching technique. In Detroit, the Coalition of Labor Union Women sponsored a Macarena march and get-out-the-vote rally a week before Election Day.

Hold voter registration drives. In Kansas, Working Women Vote '96 hit the road with a two-day, 10-city voter registration bus tour through Kansas' Fourth Congressional District. ■

OUR WORKPLACES BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

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The public is led to believe that we live in an era that is kinder, gentler and more tolerant of unions and the rights of workers to seek out unions without management interference.

The truth, however, is very different.

A one-day walkout

and Teamsters rally on June 22 at the Atlanta Overnite Transportation company successfully pressured management to return to the bargaining table on June 24. The date was no coincidence: Unions nationwide were marking June 24 as the "Day to Make Our Voices Heard." From New York City to San Francisco, from Miami to Anchorage, Alaska, thousands of workers and community supporters in more than 70 cities rallied and demonstrated, met with local city councils and held community meetings to support the right to improve their lives and futures by organizing unions.

Workers are counteracting increasingly aggressive employer efforts to thwart their rights by generating public and political support in their communities and winning organizing campaigns. According to Kate Bronfenbrenner, director of Labor Education Research at Cornell University, almost all employers use aggressive tactics to block workers when they attempt to exercise their right to organize: 91 percent of employers respond to attempts to unionize with mandatory, closed-door meetings with employees to attack unions; 80 percent hire union-busting firms to fight organizing drives; and 50 percent threaten to eliminate workers' jobs if they join together in a union.

As part of its June 24 actions, the Massachusetts State Federation released a pilot study by the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, detailing the most common employer tactics in the state: firings, threats, intimidation and unjust discipline. According to "Our Right to Organize: Labor Law Violations Committed During Union Organizing Campaigns in Massachusetts":

"The days of bosses strong-arming employees at the ballot box...intimidating or threatening employees to coerce them to vote 'no union,' are often portrayed as a part of history. The public is led to believe that the days of club-carrying management 'enforcers' are over and that we live in an era which is kinder, gentler and more tolerant of unions and the rights of workers to seek unions without management interference. The truth, however, is very different."

June 24 actions were a direct result of efforts by central labor councils involved in the Union Cities initiative, which seeks to mobilize members to persuade local political leaders and community allies to battle anti-union efforts and support the right of workers to organize. Key to member mobilization are Street Heat actions—such as the June 24 rallies, which caught the attention of the media from



Big Sky: Mantana Stote AFL-CIO COPE Directar Darrell Halzer is jained at o union picnic by the state attarney general and Democrotic and Republican candidotes far lacal affice.



Special delivery: A rally and one-day wolkout on June 22 by Teomsters of the Atlanta Overnite Transportation company pressured management to return to the bargaining toble an June 24.

coast to coast. During a noisy rush-hour rally in the shadow of Baltimore's Camden Yards baseball field, workers at the Deaton Nursing Home, along with religious, political and community supporters, got fired up for a scheduled July 8 vote to join SEIU District 1199E-DC. Waving yellow flags with black sunbursts, workers said their lack of input in the workplace compromises the quality of care. "A

union would give us a voice" in staffing matters, says Patricia Bell, a patient care assistant. Three ministers and an NAACP official addressed the more than 200 marchers. In Norwalk, Conn., where union leaders say five workers were fired for trying to organize with SEIU District 1199 NE, workers joined with

politicians and civic and religious leaders in an evening rally.

"After management found out we were organizing, we were sentenced to hell and damnation," Bonita Mayberry, a former health care worker at the Honey Hill nursing home, said at the rally.

At the same time, workers gained critical support from congressional lawmakers. Rep. David Bonoir (D-Mich.), who has taken the lead in Congress to raise awareness and mobilize support for the

right to organize, spearheaded a discussion with members of Congress on the issue, and kicked off a series of House speeches with a statement that provided the framework for June 24 actions.

Federation leaders joined union members in raising public awareness about the obstacles employers create when workers seek to improve their lives and the lives of their families by joining a union.

"It ought to be a civil right of every worker to form a union," AFL-CIO Executive Vice President



A mile high: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Lindo Chavez-Thampsan spake ta a crawd af 250 in Denver, where members of OCAW Locol 2-477 hove waged a three-year struggle ta get o contract.

June 24 Actions Got Results

June 24 actions resulted in victories for union members across the country. A few examples:

The Boston Celtics backed off an attempt to use nonunion contractors to build a new training center when they learned that workers planned a protest march.

Employees at Union Tank Car in Houston won an election just days after 45 workers and community leaders stopped by the company on a June 24 "justice bus" tour to meet with workers. Union Tank Car workers in Chicago lent a hand by testifying at a hearing on employer efforts to thwart unionization and by sending a delegation to the company's Windy City headquarters.





Linda Chavez-Thompson told a

crowd of 250 in Denver, where

members of OCAW have waged a

three-year struggle to get a con-

tract, battling an employer that

join OCAW Local 2-477. In

refuses to respect their choice to

Queens, N.Y., 300 limousine dri-

vers and their supporters, includ-

ing AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer,

Richard Trumka, rallied in front of

the Last Radio Group Corp., which

is trying to beat back efforts by the

workers to join the Machinists by

claiming the drivers are "indepen-

dent contractors" rather than

A driving issue: 300 limousine drivers and their supporters, including AFL-CIO Secretary-Treosurer Richord Trumka, rallied in front of the Lost Radio Group Corp., which is trying to beot bock efforts by the workers to join the Machinists.

to join UNITE two years ago. Two of those arrested were state legislators. "The company doesn't want to recognize the rights of low-paid workers, doesn't want to recog-

nize that they have concerns, dignity and the right to organize," said James Bush III, a Democrat representing Miami.

"The decision to join a union belongs to workers, not employers." labor council President Elsie Allen told the commission. "Millions of workers would join a union tomorrow if employers didn't routinely declare war on workers who choose to join.'

In Houston, workers took their message on the road, traveling on a "justice bus" on a one-day tour to six companies that are standing in the way of organizing efforts. Along the way, they talked to workers about the tactics employers use to circumvent workers' rights to come together in a union. Richard Shaw, the Harris County AFL-CIO Council secretary-treasurer, presented a "No Justice Here" award to an official of the Mariner Health nursing home, which has been

standing in the way of contract negotiations ever since workers voted to join the UFCW a year ago. Shaw also bestowed a "Justice for Workers" award on Kroger Food grocery stores, because the company respects its employees and supports California strawberry workers in their struggle to win justice and respect. "People ask me what Union Cities is about. Well, it brought everyone together; we all acted as though we were in one union," says Shaw.

Members of religious communities joined union members in numerous June 24 events. The National



Our right: Massachusetts workers join Jobs

With Justice for a June 24 rally. Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice published a theological statement urging religious organizations to get more involved. "Many faith bodies have social justice teachings on workers' rights to organize," the committee says. "But having solid positions and statements is not sufficient. Those in the religious community who are serious about economic justice must begin to put their priorities into action." In Dewitt, N.Y., the Greater Syracuse Labor Council enlisted the help of a rabbi and a Presbyterian minister to write a letter certifying that a majority of public employees seek to join the Civil Service Employees Associa-

tion/AFSCME. But when a town supervisor unexpectedly showed up at the union's rally, she wouldn't take the letter-or the oversized check for \$25,000 the union says the city is spending on legal fees to fight the workers' efforts to unionize. 🖾

For a checklist of ideas for following up on June 24 activities, call the AFL-CIO Organizing Department at 202-639-6225.

For information on the new AFL-CIO "Communities@work: A Guide to Restoring Our Right to Organize," call the AFL-CIO Support Services Dept., 202-637-5042.



employees.

Buffenborger (left), chair of the AFL-CIO Executive Council's state and local central labor council committee, joins the June 24 actions.

The Federation plans to continue working with union leaders In New York: Mochinists President Tom who held events on June 24, to initiate follow-up actions focusing on workers' right to organize and to strengthen ties with religious,

community and political leaders in local organizing campaigns.

Workers also told their stories at public hearings. The Chicago Federation of Labor, the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice and Jobs With Justice brought together workers to testify before a panel of religious, community and political leaders, including a Labor Department representative. A supermarket clerk, a graduate student-teacher, health care workers and steel workers outlined the tactics their employers use to frustrate organizing efforts. In Rochester, N.Y., three workers and local SEIU leaders testified before the city council to urge local lawmakers to draft legislation or a resolution supporting the workers' efforts. A majority of the council also voiced support for holding a public hearing on the year-long attempt by Noritonia nursing home workers, who voted for SEIU Local 1199RC by a 4-to-1 margin to get a first contract.

In Helena, Mont., the Big Sky Central Labor Council held a "Labor Speaks Out" rally, followed by a hot dog picnic that was attended by the state attorney general and 10 Democratic and Republican candidates for state and county offices. At the picnic, the Helena mayor and a county commissioner presented workers and their families with a proclamation declaring June 24 Workers' Rights Day.

Six supporters of the workers at the Kitchens of the Oceans shrimp processing plant in Miami were arrested when they tried to deliver a letter condemning the company's planned move. The company sought to relocate after workers, most of them Haitians, voted

The Union Difference— Get the Facts

Give out this information to reporters prior to Labor Day and photocopy to create handouts for Labor Day events.

nion members know that collective bargaining power means better health and retirement benefits, more secure jobs, bigger paychecks and a brighter future for their families.

But it can be tough to get that message across in organizing campaigns—especially when more and more workers hold part-time jobs, or toil under contingent and other nonstandard work arrangements. To be effective, organizers and activists need to arm themselves with the facts that prove the union difference.

Union pay is higher for nearly all types of work

Union workers earn 34 percent more than nonunion workers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 1997, that meant \$640 in median weekly earnings for full-time work, compared with \$478 for nonunion workers.

Union membership brings one of the greatest pay differences in the protective services, where members earn \$724 per week, compared with \$418 for nonunion members—a difference of 73 percent. The union difference means that union machine operators earn 50 percent more than nonunion operators, and union administrative and clerical workers earn 35 percent more than employees who don't belong to unions.

The union advantage in earnings also is substantial in farming, fish and forestry (74 percent), laborers and handlers (64 percent), transportation and moving (46 percent), precision, craft and repair (45 percent) and technicians (20 percent).

Union wages are higher for minorities and women

Union women earn 40 percent more than nonunion women; African American union members earn 44 percent more than their nonunion counterparts; for Latino workers, the union advantage is 53 percent.

"Our union [job] pays \$2 to \$3 more

than most of the nonunion jobs around here. I used to work 16 hours to make what I now earn in an eight-hour day. We get good benefits in our package, and a pension plan that is only an option for nonunion workers."—James Corl, Culinary Workers Local 226.

Union workers have better benefits

Union workers are more likely to receive health care benefits, according to the U.S. Labor Department. In 1995, 85 percent of union workers in medium and large establishments had medical care benefits—compared with 74 percent of nonunion workers.

And organized workers are also more likely to have retirement and short-term disability benefits. In fact, 79 percent of unionists have defined-benefit coverage plans, which are federally insured with a guaranteed monthly payment, compared with 44 percent of nonunion workers.

"A month-long hospital stay could have meant financial ruin. But because of my union, my medical bills were covered, my wife and three children received financial help and I returned to a job I enjoy. Belonging to Laborers Local 156 literally saved my life."—Scott Small, New Brunswick, N.J.

Incomes are higher in free states

Right-to-work laws are a bad deal for workers because they hinder their ability

to exercise collective bargaining rights and lower the average pay for everyone at the worksite. These restrictions result in lower union density: The percentage of workers who belong to unions is 7.6 percent in right-to-work states, compared with 16.8 percent in free states.

This is a clear bread-and-butter issue. In 1996, the average annual pay in free states was \$29,100, and in right-to-work states, it was \$24,600—an 18 percent difference.

Unions increase productivity

Recent studies indicate that unions increase productivity. The voice that union members have on the job—which helps them share in decision-making about promotions and work and production standards—increases productivity and improves management practices. Better training, lower turnover and longer tenure also make union workers more productive.

"When this company hit a bad patch, our union didn't walk away. We took our ideas to management and they listened. We came together as a team to get this company back on the road. Now everyone has a voice in making this plant work better."—Mike Gunarich, machinist at Harley-Davidson, York, Pa.

Union workers have greater job stability

Sixty percent of union workers have been with their current employers for at least 10 years, but only 30 percent of nonunion workers can make the same claim. Union workers have greater job stability, in part because they're more satisfied with their jobs, get better pay and benefits and have access to fair grievance procedures.

More important, most collectively bargained agreements protect workers from unjust discharge. Nonunion workers are "employees at will" who can be fired at any time for any reason—or no reason at all.

Unions are important for women and minorities

"Being in a union that pushed affirmative action has made a difference in my life. It

The Union Difference— Get the Facts

gave me an opportunity that I didn't believe possible."—Alexandra Brown, engine assembler at General Electric in Lynn, Mass., and member of Electronic Workers Local 201.

Because collective bargaining emphasizes equal pay and fair treatment—union membership narrows the historic gap in pay and opportunities between women and men, and between minorities and whites. That's why union membership can be particularly important for women, African American, Asian American and Latino workers who face ongoing discrimination.

African American men and women have the highest unionization rates in the country—20 percent and 16 percent, respectively. In 1997, Latinas were as likely to belong to unions as white women (11 percent), while Latino men (13 percent) trailed white men (16 percent). The unionization rate was 13 percent for Asian American male workers, and 12 percent for females. While union membership has declined for white and African American workers since 1983, the first year data was recorded, it has risen 20 percent among Latinos.

The number of women union members has risen 7.4 percent from 1983 to 1997, from 5.9 million to 6.3 million.

Workers of all ages belong to unions

Union membership is highest among 45to 54-year-olds, 29 percent of whom are organized. In addition, almost 1 million union members are younger than 25.

These facts and more are part of *The Union Difference: Fast Facts on Union Membership and Pay, 1998*, available for \$1.95 each from the AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; 202-637-5042. Another useful booklet in telling the union story to nonunion workers and community allies is *Today's Unions*. Contact the number above for ordering information.

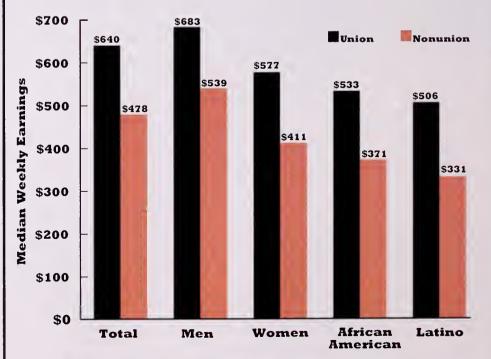
UNIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY

| Industry | Union Productivity Effect |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Manufacturing | (19–24%) |
| Construction | 17–38% |
| Cement Plants | 6–12% |
| Hospital | 0–16% |
| Banking | 0% |
| Furniture | 15% |

Saurce: Dale Belman, "Unians, the Quality af Labar Relatians, and Firm Performance," in *Unions and Ecanamic Competitive*ness, eds. Lawrence Mishel and Paula B. Voos (Armank, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.: 1992), pp. 41–107.
Prepared by the AFL-CIO.

UNIONS RAISE WAGES Especially for Minorities and Women

Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers, 1997



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Earnings, January 1998. Prepared by the AFL-CIO.

No contest: Workers of the upscole Los Vegos furniture store, Nest Feotherings, stoge on eloborote gome show in on effort to goin union recognition. Sign up with a union. Painters locals 159 and 2001 and the Southern Nevada Regional Coun

Standing outside the upscale Nest Featherings furniture store in Las Vegas, Hector Cabrall plays a "contestant" in "The Price Is Wrong," a mock game show that gives passersby and store customers a lively look at how tough it can be to organize.

Cabrall, a carpenter at Nest Featherings' Hardy Paint and Drywall, tells the audience he was fired because he "talked to a union organizer." Interacting with the game show's "host," Cabrall says he spends \$100 a week on groceries for a family of four.

"For the grand prize," the host asks, "tell me how many weeks of grocery bills for your family of four would it take to purchase this lovely armoire which you've helped create?"

"It would take 34 weeks of my family's groceries to pay for this lovely armoire."

"Wrong. Because you were laid off and you've had to cut down on food for your family, it would take 68 weeks of groceries to pay for this lovely armoire—more than a year."

The game show is one of dozens of actions the more than 100 Hardy's workers have staged over the past year, trying to get the firm to recognize their right to

sign up with a union. Painters locals 159 and 2001 and the Southern Nevada Regional Council of Carpenters jointly organized the workers, who perform extensive remodeling for Nest Featherings clients.

Nest Featherings/Hardy has committed so many unfair labor practices, the unions say, that the National Labor Relations Board ordered it to bargain with the workers' representatives, which the company so far has refused to do.

Home Sweet Union-Built Home

ith the support of their international unions, volunteers from the Laborers, Teamsters, Painters and Carpenters worked with two Washington, D.C., working families to build homes as part of the nationwide Habitat for Humanity project. Yvette Gillis, a dietary aide at a health care facility and mother of one, and Melissa Strickland, a staff member of D.C. Habitat for Humanity and mother of two children, moved into their newly built homes on June 25.

"These families, and the opportunity to make their dreams come true, are what this partnership between organized labor and Habitat for Humanity is all about," said Jack Wilkinson, Laborers' Mid-Atlantic vice president, at the dedication ceremony.

Carpenters President Doug McCarron said that when union volunteers use their skills to build Labor for Habitat homes where families

can come together and children can grow up healthy, they're "building a foundation of hope for a better future." Founded in 1988, the Washington, D.C., program is one of more than 1,300 affiliates of the national Habitat for Humanity, which aims to bring together volunteers and people in need to build affordable homes. The union volunteers are members of the Washington, D.C., area building trades unions and international union staff.



Home bound: Reody to move into their new homes, two Woshington, D.C., fomilies join Loborers Mid-Atlantic Vice President Jack Wilkinson, who praised the union—community effort to build the homes.

Union Ad **Bus**-ted

hen does a group of union members become a "mob" that can appear "intimidating." When they carry signs, according to the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority, which operates the Queen City Metro buses that serve the Cincinnati area.

At issue is a wraparound bus ad that UFCW Local 1099 sought to buy in early 1997, in time to premier at the opening day parade for the Cincinnati Reds baseball team. SORTA's general manager flatly rejected the ad, even though the union has diplayed a different wraparound bus ad since 1994.

Court papers filed by SORTA attorneys said the ad was frighten-

ing because "one entire side of the bus was to be covered with a large photograph of a mob of persons, many of whom are holding picket signs, and certain of whose facial expressions, body positions and placement conveyed a solemn, if not angry, tone and intimidating visual."

Local 1099 argued that SORTA hadn't clearly defined its standard for ads and that SORTA's actions amounted to "content discrimina-

tion." Basically, says Local 1099 attorney Robert Newman, the authority didn't like the ad because it contained a union message. The handful of signs carried by the 49 union members in the ad read, "UFCW Local 1099" and "Union Shop."

After a federal district court ruling in favor of Local 1099, SORTA appealed, and the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is expected to rule this summer.



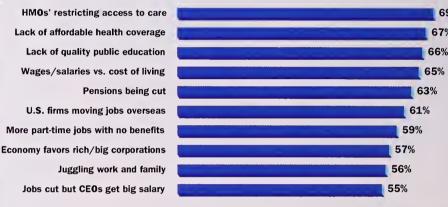
HEALTH CARE for Working Families

orking Americans are deeply concerned about having secure, affordable health care for themselves and their families. And their concern is well-founded: 42 million Americans are uninsured, and 85 percent of the uninsured are workers and members of working families.

Cost-shifting has made it more difficult for working families with access to health care to afford it. Between 1988 and 1996, the average premium contribution workers paid for family coverage increased by 146 percent. Our nation's health care policy should aim to provide coverage for all working families. Union members, together with the AFL-CIO, plan to keep health care issues in the forefront as Congress debates various bills that would ensure quality, affordable health care for working families.

TOP CONCERNS: Health Care, Education, Wages, Pensions

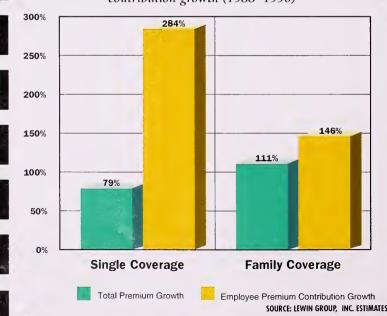
Percentage who say issue is a serious problem, ranking 8-10 on 10-point scale



SOURCE: POLL FOR THE AFL-CIO BY PETER D. HART RESEARCH ASSOCIATES.

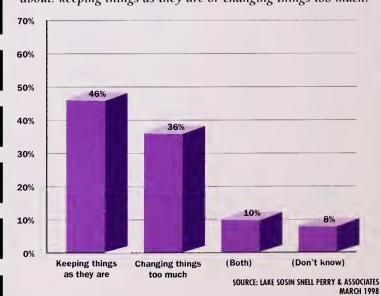
Employers Have Shifted Rising Health Costs to Working Families

Total premium growth compared with employee premium contribution growth (1988–1996)



Voters Want a Change in Health Care

Overall, when you think about national health care reform and health care in America today, which are you more worried about: keeping things as they are or changing things too much?





Detail from "The New Arrivals II" by Mark Priest.

Women on the Railroad

A series of acrylic paintings and woodcuts by award-winning artist Mark Priest portrays the women who worked in the traditionally male domain of the railroad, the prejudices they faced and their determination to succeed at the demanding tasks required to lay and repair the rails. Before launching his career as an artist, Priest worked as a machine operator with the CSX Railroad, and was a member of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes. "Women on the Railroad: Paintings by Mark Priest," is on exhibit at the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Md., until Nov. 6.

Working Women Conference 2000 On March 11-12, 2000 in Chicago, the AFL-CIO will host Working Women Conference 2000, a large-scale follow-up to the Working Women Working Together conference. Thousands of working women from across the nation will come together to build strategies to change our workplaces, mobilize around key issues and send a message to political candidates that working women will not be taken for granted. For more information about getting the word out about the conference, write AFL-CIO Working Women's Dept., 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006; call 202-637-5064; fax 202-508-6902.

PUBLICATIONS

A New Labor Movement for the New Century, edited by Gregory Mantsios, includes essays by labor leaders, organizers and union members that overview the union movement's years of decline in membership and clout, while offering a prescription for returning strength to the movement to enable it to flourish in the next century.

The writers agree that four main building blocks will undergird a new, stronger trade union movement in America: organizing the unorganized; engaging in democratic and inclusive practices that empower workers, especially women and people of color; building political and community alliances as part of a new electoral strategy based on political mobilization and responding in international arenas to the new global economy.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, in an afterword, recaps the essays and notes the changes in the union movement since 1995. Writers include Dennis Rivera, president of

1199/National Health and Human Service Employees, SEIU and a Federation vice president; two retired AFL-CIO vice presidents, George Kourpias, retired Machinists' president and Tony Mazzocchi, retired



OCAW president; three Federation department directors, Barbara Shailor (International Affairs), Bill Fletcher (Education) and Ron Blackwell (Corporate Affairs); and Stephen Lerner, Building and Construction Trades Department organizing director. \$24. Available in paperback from Monthly Review Press after September 6; 800-670-9499.

Pocketbook Pressures: Who Benefits from Economic Growth? ana-

lyzes wage stagnation and overviews the economic rules that provide income growth and fairness. Noting that recent productivity gains have not resulted in wage hikes and higher incomes for most workers, the book describes three diagnoses of the situation and discusses the economic choices facing the United States. \$11.68. McGraw-Hill, P.O. Box 545, Blacklick, Ohio 43004; 800-338-3987.

Making the News: A Guide for Nonprofits & Activists,

by Jason Salzman, is a soup-tonuts guide to getting media coverage. In 289 pages, readers can learn how to stage a media event-or get coverage without one. The book provides tips on how to handle unwanted media attention and how to become a media source by cultivating relationships with journalists. A section on developing a strategy to win campaigns highlights legal, consumer, electoral and lobbying strategies. A resources section features other media how-to books, media watchdog groups, communications consultants, media literacy organizations and community organizing and fund-raising information. \$19.95. Available from Westview Press, P.O. Box 588, Dunsmore, Pa. 18512-0588; 800-331-3761.

The Inequality Paradox: Growth of Income Disparity, edited by James Auerbach and Richard S. Belous, examines the

pernicious growth of income inequality, its root causes and trends, how it affects collective bargaining, the impact of immigration and the policy options that could narrow the wage gap. The book is based on

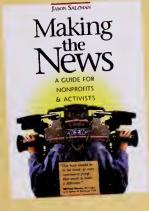
papers presented by key leaders from govern-

ment, business and labor during an

THE INEQUALITY PARADOX:

GROWTH OF INCOME DISPARITY

April 1997 conference of the National Policy Association. \$19.95, from the NPA, 1424 16th St., N. W., Washington, D.C. 20036; 202-265-7685.





hen they talk about fixing Social Security, I heard that some lawmakers want to raise the retirement age to 70. As an aide in a group home for physically and mentally disabled adults, I know how unfair that would be to my young coworkers. We've had all sorts of injuries. Our backs are hurting. We've been bitten, caught pneumonia and been exposed to hepatitis. I've been working since I

was 14. I'm 62 now, and I can't imagine doing this until 70."

—Beth Hamilton

AFSCME District Council 94

Beth Hamilton shares the concerns of millions of working families. We know that something must be done to make sure that Social Security is

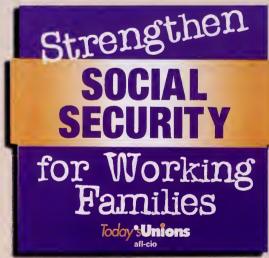
there for us and for our children. But we also know that changes to the Social Security system must not come at the expense of working women and men.

Social Security is the one guaranteed retirement benefit every worker can count on. Social Security also provides a lifeline for the 44 million injured or disabled workers and their dependent and surviving family members.

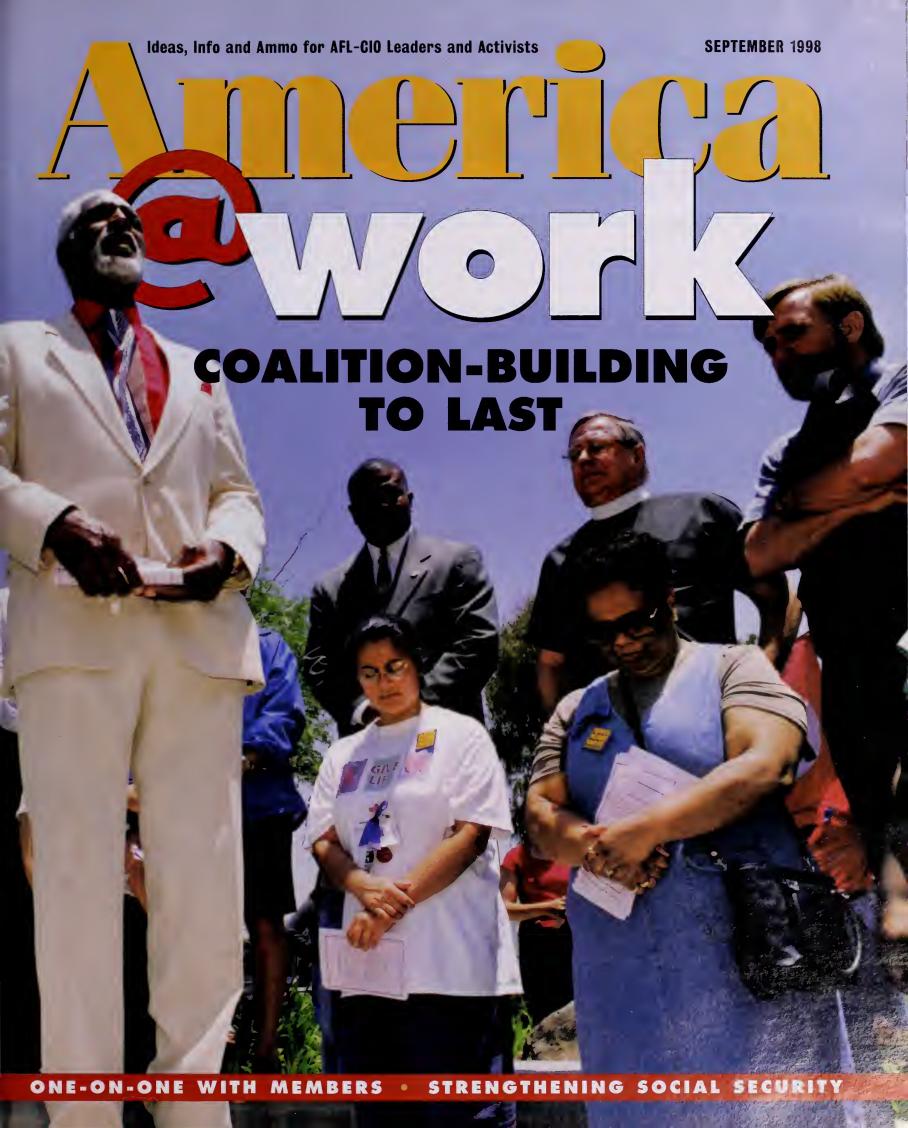
Now working families can make their voices heard, so that the future of Social Security won't be decided by policymakers and politicians—by people who think it's a good idea to raise the retirement age to 70.

The AFL-CIO and its affiliates are now launching a grassroots

The AFL-CIO and its affiliates are now launching a grassroots campaign to take working families' concerns to Congress. Call to become part of the Social Security Action Team or to find out about training sessions for your local union, 877-760-2340.



Without Social Security, half of the elderly in America would fall below the poverty line. Yet, proposals now under discussion seek to eliminate or severely limit Social Security benefits.



Ideas and Views From You

CHILD LABOR HITS HOME

(a) "It was with great interest that we read your article on child labor, 'Bringing Home Child Labor' [June America@work], and the efforts of the Apparel Industry Partnership and the Solidarity Center to combat it and to motivate union leaders and their members to play an active role in that endeavor....As you say, it is not easy to explain to American children that the toys they crave carry the pain of children their age who make them but who never could afford them. However...those same children, once aware of the abysmal conditions under which such children labor, are truly appalled and are anxious to play a role in correcting or at least alleviating the darkest of these practices and conditions.

"The UAW Speakers' Bureau...set about...formulating a classroom approach that would hold the (middle and secondary school) students' attention and motivate them to monitor their own purchases and communicate their thoughts to the major corporations involved in both sweatshop and child labor....The students were dumbfounded and outraged that...children are still exploited and condemned to a life of hardship and misery while denied the education these students take for granted."-William Hill, coordinator, UAW Southeastern Pennsylvania Speakers' Bureau

(a) "The series on child labor in the June issue is just terrific. Congratulations to Mr. Kameras and the staff who put the piece together. As IATSE Local 705/Motion Picture Costumers, we're 1,600-plus active members engaged in the art of costuming (wardrobe) for film and television production. I think it particularly poignant to share this piece with our members, as they often make decisions about the purchases of...clothing to dress cast...."—Angelo Pacella, administrative assistant, Theatrical Stage Employees Local 705, Hollywood

(a) "I...was quite disturbed by the article about child labor in the June issue. I wish we could print the entire article in our branch newsletter, but we just don't have that capability (yet)....

"P.S. I want to let you know that the new format and style have moved your magazine to the top of my monthly reading list. Keep up the wonderful work."—Laura Lee Schmitt, president, Letter Carriers Branch 436, Racine, Wis.

SAY WHAT?/HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY **RUNNING AN ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN** WITHOUT AN NLRB ELECTION:

The construction trades do it all the time. In fact, I am not aware of any NLRB. Basically, the organizing is done 'bottom-up' and less frequently 'top-down.'"— Arthur Kunis, education and research director, Oregon AFL-CIO

> America@wark (ISSN 1091594X) is designed to inspire and support frantline union leaders and activists with tips, tools and news you can use in the fight ta build a strong vaice far America's warking families. It is the afficial publication of the American Federation of Labor and Cangress of Industrial Organizations and is issued monthly. Periodicals

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Denise Mitchell (Assistant to the President for Public Affairs); Donna M. Jablonski (Publications Director); Tula Connell (Editor); Mike Hall, David Kameros, James B. Parks (Assistant Editors); Arlee C. Green, Laureen Lazarovici (Staff Writers); Barbaro Parker (Copy Editor). Design: The Magazine Group, Inc.

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Jahn J. Sweeney, President Richard L. Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer Linda Chavez-Thampson, Executive Vice President

Vice Presidents: Stuart Appelbaum • J. Randalph Babbitt • Mortan Bahr • Jahn J. Barry • George F. Becker • Moe Biller • Jahn Bowers • Clayala Brown R. Thamas Buffenbarger • Elizabeth Bunn • Ran Carey • Arthur A. Caia • Douglas H. Darity • Sandra Feldman • Edward Fire M.A. "Mac" Fleming • Pat Friend • Rabert A. Geargine • Michael Goodwin • Joe L. Greene • Sonny Hall • Fronk Hanley • Bobby Harnage Sumi Haru • Carroll Haynes • Frank Hurt • Glaria T. Jahnson • Jahn T. Jayce • James La Sala • William Lucy • Leon Lynch • Martin J. Maddalani Jay Mazur • Daug McCarran • Gerald W. McEntee • Michael E. Manroe • Arthur Moore • James J. Nartan • Dennis Rivero • Arturo S. Rodriguez Michael Sacca • Rabert A. Scardelletti • Vincent R. Sambrotta • Andrew L. Stern • Gene Upshaw • Rabert E. Wages • Jake West Alfred K. Whitehead • Jahn W. Wilhelm • Stephen P. Yokich • Bayd D. Yaung

SOMETHING'S GONE TERRIBLY WRONG

When you see unions@work and our

members@work

and collective power

in our communities@work,

that's when you see

(a) "Twenty years ago, fresh out of the military, I went to work for Caterpillar Tractor Co....Unfortunately, a few years later, the company drastically downsized its union plants and I was laid off. I went back to school and earned three degrees with honors. But unable to find work, I ended up at a local garment factory....Needing a more steady income, I quit and went to work in a nonunion machine shop. I now operate two very complicated and sensitive computer-operated lathes, making Caterpillar parts for \$6.75 an hour with no benefits. To make ends meet, my wife works for another nonunion company during the days, while I work nights, which means we seldom see each other anymore. The job is very stressful and I dread going to work each day. Is it me or has something gone terribly wrong along the way?" (name withheld by request), former UAW and UNITE member, Toluca, Ill.

Say What?

How has your union involved the community in organizing campaigns? Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

America@work 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908;

e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org



AFL-CIO Public Affairs Department

815 16th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006 Telephane: 202-637-5010 Fax: 202-508-6908

E-mail: atwark@aflcia.arg Internet: http://www.aflcia.arg





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 Union volunteers are talking to members one-on-one, registering

Union volunteers are talking to members one-on-one, registering them to vote and working to elect candidates this fall who support a Working Families Agenda

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: V. HUNTER

Sine Till

SWEATSHOPS

'How Can This be Happening in 1998?'



Get the message: Thousands of UNITE members rallied on Capitol Hill after lawmakers backed away from antisweatshop legislation.

hen nearly 2,000
UNITE members from up and down the East
Coast traveled to Capitol Hill for an all-day lobbying session July
29, they had a clear message: It's time to stop sweatshops, not create more.

Last summer, pro-business law-makers, with backing from many large retailers and manufacturers, stalled passage of the Stop Sweatshops Act, a tough new antisweatshop law. Instead, Congress held hearings orchestrated by anti-union lawmakers in an attempt to shift the blame for the growing number of U.S. sweatshops from the employers to the union.

"I have friends who work in sweatshops with rats, dirty water and abusive supervisors. I could

be working there too, but I have a union," says Frances Ramos, a San Antonio, Texas, garment worker, one of four featured in a full-page UNITE ad in the *Washington Post*. "...How can this be happening today, in America, in 1998?"

The workers also called on Congress to increase enforcement of existing wage and hour laws and boost funding for the U.S. Department of Labor, which has too few inspectors to locate law-breaking garment makers.

On the eve of the rally, a federal judge in Manhattan ruled that an apparel maker may be held responsible for a contractor's failure to pay overtime to its employees, a decision that UNITE President Jay Mazur called "monumental."

Homework: Through coordinated legislative action, public- and private-sector home care workers won wage increases in Illinois.

HOME CARE WORKERS RAISE WAGE CEILING

n a campaign that combined legislative and organizing action, SEIU Local 880 home health care workers in Illinois won a 6 percent wage boost for 10,000 public-sector employees and a 9.5 percent increase for 4,000 private-sector workers.

"We wanted 'the real thing," a raise that mirrored the recent increase in the federal minimum wage, says Keith Kelleher, Local 880 head organizer. The key to winning, says Kelleher, was laying the groundwork early. Union members kicked off their effort in January with New Year's rallies across the state, followed by speak-outs and rallies with state legislators in the spring.

The victory is the latest in Local 880's 12-year campaign to improve the wages and working

conditions of home care workers who, as recently as 1985, earned \$3.35 an hour. At that time, some workers earned only \$1 an hour because the state, which funds companies that provide the services, classified the workers as "independent contractors." Local 880 lobbied the legislature to reclassify the employees, and set about winning wage increases every year since 1986. Local 880 has organized 8,000 public-sector and 4,000 private-sector home care workers since 1984.



Plucky: A coalition of community groups joins with poultry workers in the struggle for justice.

Poultry Worker Alliance Takes Flight

Poultry workers spend hours wrestling with sharp-clawed chickens that are constantly rinsed in water. As a result, workers' feet are submerged in cold water as they stand side by side wielding sharp knives—conditions that frequently expose workers to salmonella poisoning and lead to serious injuries and long-term health problems.

These are some of the hazards workers face in the lower Delaware region that the Delmarva Poultry Justice Alliance seeks to document in a video now in production. The alliance also is conducting training to enable its members to speak to central labor councils and religious groups on the issues workers and farmers face, which also include unpaid over-

time and low wages while industry profits are skyrocketing.

This stepped-up public information campaign comes after the alliance—made up of UFCW Local 27 and religious, Latino, African American and environmental groups—hosted several information booths documenting the job conditions of poultry workers at an annual industry-sponsored poultry festival in June.

At its convention in July, UFCW delegates signed a poultry justice support card, pledging to support poultry workers with their purchases. The UFCW is helping 100 local unions and regional coordinators set up poultry justice alliances with religious groups to create a support foundation for card-check campaigns.

Street Heot: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Lindo Chovez-Thompson speaks to unionists and their supporters during o rolly to protest the Chicogo Tribune Co.'s refusol to recognize technicions ot Chicogolond TV, who voted for AFTRA in April.

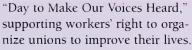
Organizing for Justice CLCs

ore than 400 representatives of state and local labor councils, constituency groups and religious and community activists met in Chicago July 31-August 2 for Union City by City, an in-depth assessment of the Union Cities initiative a year and a half after its inauguration. One hundred-forty-eight labor councils are on the road to Union Cities, an eight-step blueprint to make their communities better places to live and to work.

Through a series of panels and small discussion groups, participants focused on Labor '98 and successful strategies for building strong, pro-worker communities. "It was clear from the discussions

that labor councils have gotten more active in generating Street Heat action and in supporting organizing and building our political power," says Marilyn Sneiderman, AFL-CIO Field Mobilization director.

Led by AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, participants applied Street Heat by marching in support of Chicagoland Television employees whose bosses at the Chicago Tribune Co. refuse to recognize their April 15, 1998 vote for AFTRA. Councils also signed pledges of support for UNITE's campaign at Feccheimer, a major uniform manufacturer, and to build on successful events held June 24, the



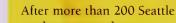
The National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice held a parallel conference and joined the CLCs for a number of joint activities, including a Sunday morning interfaith worship service.

In addresses to the CLC conference, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and Chavez-Thompson reminded participants that the Union Cities campaign is the cornerstone for rebuilding the union movement in communities.

SUN up: After winning voluntory recognition, 200 new union members, port of Seottle Union

Now, publicly recognized their employers for

"doing the right thing."



SPOTLIGHT

workers won voluntary recognition, they made a point of publicly recognizing their employers. The new union members and their community allies packed a King County Central Labor Council meeting July 15 to honor the employers at a unique ceremony at the Labor Temple.

The workers, including stagehands, truck drivers, child care employees and others from nine companies, joined Communications Workers,

SEIU, Teamsters and Theatrical Stage Employees under the SUN (Seattle Union Now) multi-union organizing project. At the recognition ceremony, they told moving stories about their organizing efforts and presented the employers with plaques, t-shirts and flowers for "doing the right thing."

SUN Shines in Seattle

The event also helped educate the political leaders who attended—including five state representatives, city and county council members, and representatives from the mayor's and county executive's offices—about the right to organize, the shortcomings of current labor law and the importance of voluntary recognition.

SUN, which was launched in May, is a five-union project backed by the King County Labor Council working jointly to set organizing goals, respond to workers' requests for assistance, select targets, develop strategies and mobilize community and political support for the right to organize.



SUN organizer Jonathan Rosenblum says the ceremony accomplished several goals. "We honored workers who are leading the way in alternative recognition strategies. And by holding the event at the CLC meeting, we focused union members on the mission of SUN and deepen their connec-<mark>tion to our organiz</mark>ing and political work." 🛭



Job Security, Forced **Overtime Key Strike Issues**

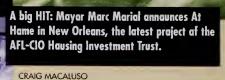
When 34,000 Communications Workers at US West and 73,000 at Bell Atlantic hit the picket lines, it wasn't over "the usual things," says CWA President Morton Bahr. The strikes were "about creating good American jobs in the telecommunications industry."

For the workers at US West, who walked out August 16, the key issues in the 13-state strike were excessive forced overtime and company demands for givebacks in health care benefits and wages.

With the full support of the AFL-CIO and 6,000 labor activists from various state and local central bodies, the workers reached agreement in two weeks that capped the overtime and raised wages by 10.9 percent over three

The strike at Bell Atlantic, the nation's second largest telephone company, began August 9. Two days later, the union and the phone company that serves customers from Maine to Virginia reached a landmark agreement that provides job security, reduces contracting-out, allows for cardcheck recognition at Bell's nonunion operations, limits mandatory overtime and boosts wages by 7.8 percent during the pact's two-year span. The next day, the 13,000 IBEW members at Bell Atlantic who had honored the picket lines while under a contract extension agreed to a similar deal.

The unique contract means CWA members will do the hightech work as Bell moves beyond traditional phone service, such as network integration, digital subscriber lines, the Internet, video services, alarm monitoring, services and sales of bundled services and long distance. The key concern for IBEW members was a company proposal to contract-out work, which Bell withdrew, as it did a health insurance copay proposal for retirees.



currents

Labor '98 Tops EC Meeting

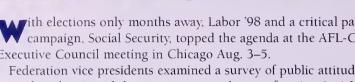
with elections only months away, Labor '98 and a critical part of that campaign, Social Security, topped the agenda at the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Chicago Aug. 3-5.

Federation vice presidents examined a survey of public attitudes toward, and reviewed the current proposals on, reforming Social Security. The Council also discussed two reports on union membership growth:

> Developing Industry Strategies: Two Developing Industry Strategies: Two
> National Union Case Studies and Union
> Membership Strength in Major U.S. Cities.

Among the guests were leading foreign trade unionists Muchtar Pakpahan, general chairman, Serikat Buruh Sejatra, Indonesia; Frank Kokori, general secretary, National

> Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, Nigeria; and Milton Dabibi, general secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association. Nigeria. @



Cauncil meeting: OCAW President Rabert Wages talks with Nigerian trade unianists Miltan Dabibi, general secretary of the Petraleum and Natural Gas Seniar Staff Association and Frank Kakari, general secretary of the Natianal Unian af Petraleum and Natural Gas Warkers.

Jobs, Homes—and Successful Pension Investments

he AFL-CIO's Housing Investment Trust (HIT) is again proving it's possible to effectively channel investment dollars while creating well-paying jobs and assisting people in reaching their goals of home ownership. HIT's latest project is a \$20 million renovation of up to 500 dilapidated and abandoned homes in New Orleans. New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial estimates that some 50 homes should be under construction by the end of the year. The refurbished homes will be offered to first-time buyers.

Under the program, At Home in New Orleans, private banks will provide mortgages for home buyers. Fannie Mae, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp., will buy up the mortgages and convert them into securities. In turn, HIT will buy up to \$20 million of the securities. Union workers will construct the houses, charging only 80 percent of the regular commercial construction price.

"This program is a model of how government, unions and the private sector can come together and rebuild neighborhoods," says Federation President John Sweeney.

HIT, which was launched in the 1960s, has more than \$1.7 billion in assets and has financed construction of more than 50,000 housing units.

ORGANIZING

AFSCME Council 31's Campaign for Care and Dignity in Illinois scored another victory in July at the Horizon House in LaSalle. An overwhelming majority of the 160 workers at the private facility for the mentally ill and developmentally disabled voted for AFSCME despite the employer's campaign of captiveaudience meetings and antiunion literature. AFSCME's recent organizing efforts have yielded 1,300 workers at 10 private agencies.

CWA With a resounding vote in August, 220 van drivers at Seattle Express cast their ballots in favor of representation by the Communication Workers.

HERE The 100 workers at the Star Trek Experience at the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel have "beamed up," winning card-check recognition with HERE locals 165 and 226. The theme bar and restaurant are operated by a hotel subcontractor.

IAM Workers at LTD Ceramics in Newark, Calif., voted to join Machinists District 190 June 30. The 240 workers make precision parts used in the manufacturing of semiconductors.

IBT The Teamsters picked up nearly 700 new members in July with a handful of organizing wins across industry lines. Local 449 waged a strong door-to-door campaign to win an election at Laidlaw Transit in North Tonawanda, N.Y. In Fairland, Ind., 150 workers at CS Integrated Services, a frozen food warehouse and distribution center, voted for Local 135. Local 436 gained 133 workers at Liverpool Coil Processing in Valley City, Ohio. At Heritage Village in Waterbury, Conn., 132 workers joined Local 677.

IUE Workers at Paragon Industries, a plastics molding plant in Warren, Ohio, voted for representation with the Electronic Workers in July. Safety was a top issue for the 214 workers at the plant, where several workers were hospitalized after they inhaled toxic fumes.

LIUNA Seeking a voice to protest low wages, meager benefits and poor working conditions—such as the temperature on the factory floor topping 100 degrees-95 workers at Falvey Linen in Cranston, R.I., are the newest Laborers members after an August election. The company provides linens and uniforms for hotels, restaurants and hospitals.

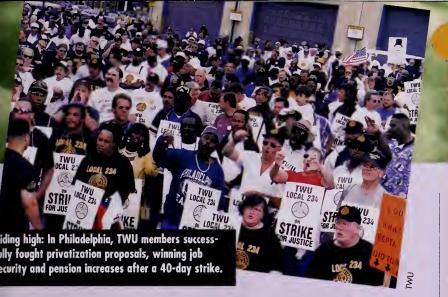
OCAW District 2 in Carlsbad, N.M., won the support of 139 workers at the Westinghouse Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP), a nuclear waste facility under contract to the U.S. Department of Energy.

OPEIU Some 2,500 members of the unaffiliated Pennsylvania Nurses Association voted to affiliate with the Office and Professional Employees in early July.

SEIU With an eye toward quality patient care and respect on the job, 2,000 registered nurses and other health care professionals at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics voted for SEIU representation. District 925 is celebrating its unanimous win to represent 180 Head Start and social service workers at the Lorain County Community Action Agency in Cleveland. A one-week organizing blitz paid off for 250 Detroit janitors when they won cardcheck recognition with SEIU Local 79.

TWU The good times will keep on rolling now that 110 workers at the Kawasaki Rail Car plant in Putnam, N.Y., voted to join the Transport Workers.

UFCW In Tacoma, Wash., 177 technical workers at St. Joseph's Medical Center voted to join UFCW Local 1001 on June 25. @



Steering to Victory

n Philadelphia, 5,400 transit workers put the brakes on a 40-day strike with a successful settlement that raises wages and pension benefits and provides increased job security.

The union won its biggest victories by turning back demands by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) to privatize routes, contract-out maintenance work, hire part-time workers and force employees to pay 50 percent of medical premium increases.

"We kept our rights for job security," says Steve Brookens, president of Local 234. "That's what the fight was over...we succeeded."

TWU members walked out June 1 after SEPTA, seeking givebacks across the contract, refused to budge from its "take it or leave it" offer. The pact was ratified July 24.

See You Next Union Summer

herever there was a high-energy, high-profile organizing campaign this summer, Union Summer interns were part of it. Whether in Cleveland, where interns helped lay the groundwork for organizing vending and concession workers at Jacobs Field, or in Los Angeles, where they joined with HERE and SEIU to mobilize service workers at the giant LAX airport, nearly 200 young people made the past few months another hot Union Summer.

In Watsonville, Calif., Union Summer interns organized an "arts for justice" festival and spent hours each day in the fields with workers, who have been battling antiunion violence. Manuel Román Jr., a 22-year-old student at Whittier College in Los Angeles, says that interns pointed out that "unions do help working families."

"I tell them its my father's union salary that's putting me through college," says Román, whose father organized his factory co-workers into the Graphic Communications Union. After college, Román also aims to work in the union movement.

On the east coast, Union Summer interns in Washington, D.C., helped pump up efforts to win justice for workers at Avondale Shipyard in New Orleans by waging a lobbying blitz with the workers on Capitol Hill. At more than 200 meetings, they asked lawmakers to write letters to the Secretary of the Navy requesting that the Defense Department-which accounts for millions of dollars of contracts for Avondale—urge the company to obey labor laws. In the process, the interns learned key lessons about unions.

"The workers were speaking for themselves and making their own voices heard," says 19-year-old Union Summer intern and Harvard student Ben Tolchin, who

> visited House Democratic Leader Rep. Richard Gephardt. "That's what unions are all about."

OUT FRONT

That will life be like for working families when our children and grand-children are grown?
What will work be like?

Will we have a more or less equitable economy? Will wealth be more or less concentrated in the hands of a fortunate few? Will women and workers of color enjoy a seat at every table? Will our workplaces look more or less like sweatshops in other countries—and, to America's shame, right here at home?

It's up to us, in large part. The future of working families depends on how well and how quickly we build political strength by increasing our membership, and how effectively we mobilize our mem-

Shape the

By John J. Sweeney

bers to make their voices heard for a Working Families Agenda.

The leaders we elect to Congress will decide whether we continue

to provide Social Security's guaranteed, lifelong, inflation-adjusted protection for workers and their families, or sell out America's most successful social program to make more profits for Wall Street.

They will decide whether we keep jobs here at home or export jobs where they can be done at the most exploitive labor costs with the least attention to workers' rights and well-being. They will decide if tomorrow's workplaces thrive with well-trained, secure and highly productive full-time workers who share the benefit of employers' successes, or stumble with nomadic troops of underpaid and undervalued contingent workers.

And their votes will bring us either quality health care for all or limited care for all but the wealthy.

In the states, legislators and governors we choose will determine whether our children can get the education they'll need to prosper in the new millennium. Whether equal pay ever will become a reality for working women. Whether attempts to silence the political voice of union members proliferate.

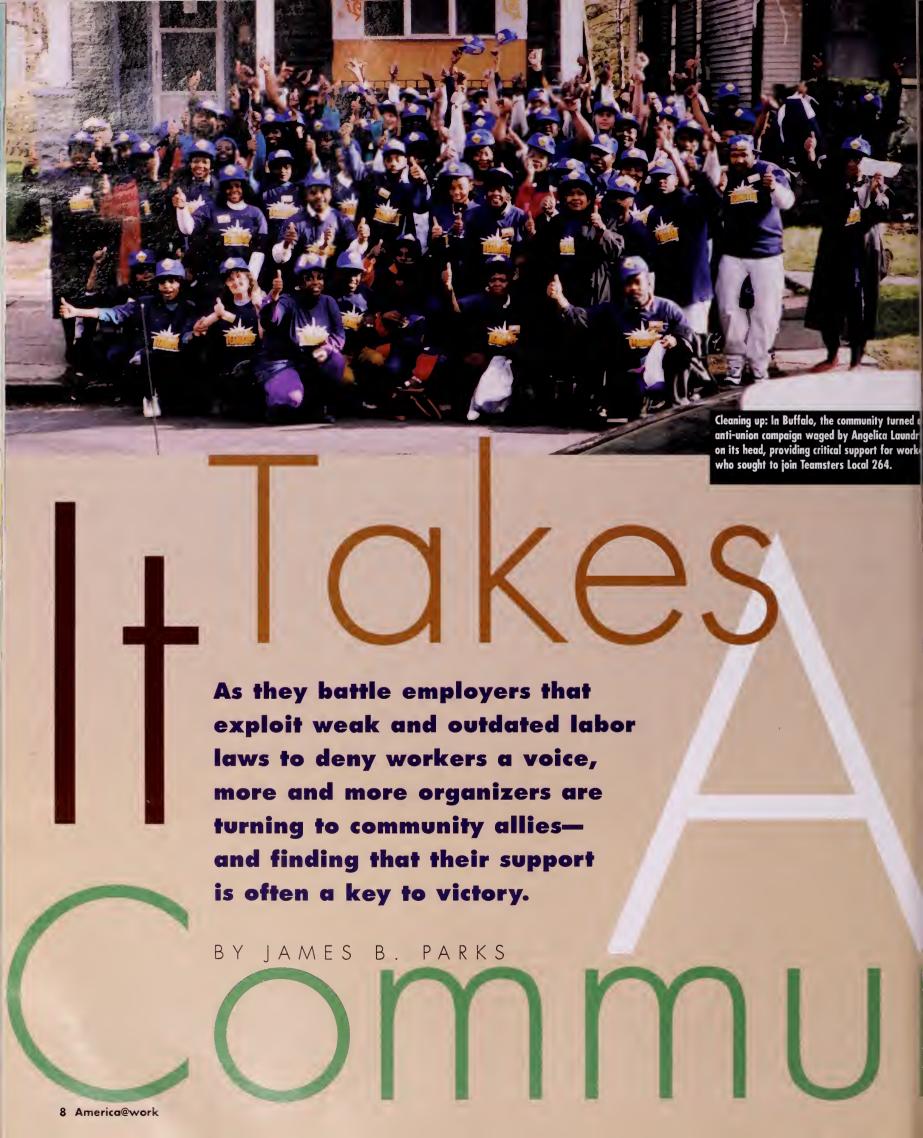
Lawmakers at every level will decide whether workers' right to organize unions to improve their lives is strengthened, and working-family-power grows in our unions, or the secret war by hostile employers is allowed to continue.

It's clear we have a full plate. Unfortunately, we don't have a full house. When so much is at stake for working families, our unions lack the strength that comes with size. Winning and sustaining a Working Families Agenda requires us to organize fast enough to gain enough political power while working families still have a chance.

Organizing and political involvement are not either-or efforts: We can't win at one without winning at the other. And to be successful, we have to change the way we do both. So we're doubling the number of grassroots activists in the field for the fall elections, emphasizing voter registration, encouraging working people to seek elective office and concentrating more effort on giving members information about where candidates stand on issues so our members can make up their own minds. We're also organizing on a larger scale, through coordinated multi-union organizing projects and industry-wide drives. And we're involving entire communities in supporting the right of workers to come together in unions.

We're working hard and we'll keep working even harder. Working families' futures are at stake.

September 1998 7



Sustoinable Milwaukee, a coalition of unions, community and religious groups and elected officials. hen 98 percent of the workers at Angelica Laundry in Buffalo, N.Y., signed union cards in 1997, they were not prepared for their employer's intense anti-union campaign that included mandatory meetings and management's hand-delivered anti-union letters. But with the backing of a unique community coalition, the workers successfully fought back.

Over the past 10 years, 25 Buffalo-area unions, clergy from more than a half-dozen denominations, community groups ranging from the NAACP to neighborhood improvement associations and legislators, law firms and individuals, had formed a broad-based Jobs With Justice coalition. They also created a 40-member workers' rights board that developed significant influence in the community.

Because of the coalition's successful efforts, the community turned the anti-union campaign on its head, attacking the company's behavior. Community support for the workers was so strong that when employees took over the plant to protest safety hazards, community and union supporters arrived by the dozens and marched inside to join them, shutting down production until managers discussed the issue.

The coalition also enlisted the public support of a hospital vice president whose facility was the laundry's biggest customer. Coalition members with political influence secured backing from county lawmakers for the workers' cause and community groups linked Angelica employees with lawyers who tackled sexual harassment complaints from workers at the plant.

On election day, the workers stood firm. Ninety-five percent voted for the Teamsters and soon won a contract that improved working conditions and wages. The plant manager was replaced and supervisors accused of sexual harassment were fired. "We would not have won the campaign without the community. It's that clear cut," says Dick Lipsitz, business agent for Teamsters Local 264.

In Buffalo, workers benefitted from the solid support of community groups developed over

many years. Meanwhile, in Greensboro, N.C., 500 workers at a Kmart distribution center who were trying to get a first contract after voting for UNITE in 1995, succeeded in their efforts with the help of local clergy.

support, organized petition drives and participated in civil disobedience for the majority African American workforce. The ministers also solicited support from community groups such as the NAACP by defining workers' right to organize as one of civil rights and equal pay. In the forefront of the fight, the ministers brought a moral authority to the workers' struggle. Finally, about a year later, the company surrendered and negotiated a contract that raised wages and gave workers dignity on the job.

Earlier this year in New Haven, Conn., a broad coalition of unions, Yale University students, religious leaders, elected officials and community groups convinced the Omni Hotel to honor a neutrality clause—an agreement not to campaign against the union-with HERE. The coalition was formed in 1996 when janitorial and dining hall employees at Yale walked off the job. That's when HERE began using computer mapping to match worker-leaders with a network of students, community groups and religious leaders. Those connections were used to promote activism and to help residents see union members as neighbors.

Union members prosperso do communities

Union membership raises the bar for an entire community's wages, including those of women and people of color. Through their unions,

The Greensboro Pulpit Forum wrote letters of

Coolition power: John Goldstein, secretory-treosurer of the Milwoukee County Lobor Council, speoks ot a city Workers Rights Boord as port of



Desert storm: Robbi Robert Cravitz speoks ot o Phoenix Guess? store, where Hisponic students joined with union workers to protest sweotshop conditions of workers who moke the compony's fomous jeons.

working families receive health and retirement benefits, which means fewer families depending on the community for support. Union members generate purchasing power that gives local economies a boost and builds a strong tax base to support public services, safety, libraries and schools. Union households also strongly support local charities through the AFL-CIO's community services network.

Working men and women who join unions earn 34 percent more than nonunion workers. Eighty-five percent of union workers in large and medium-sized workplaces have employerprovided health care benefits, compared with 74 percent of unrepresented workers.

Yet, polls show that most Americans do not know what a union does for its members-for the community—or what happens to people who try to organize a union.

Current labor laws are stacked against workers trying to organize. These laws allow employers to wage intense campaigns against the union, using legal but unethical tactics such as closed meetings and indirect threats

Reaching out: The UFCW, heoded by President Douglas Dority, is establishing community outreach committees in all the union's regions to establish permanent community contacts.



about what might happen if the union wins.

In community after community, workers are making their voices heard so that the public understands the connection between higher wages, fair workplaces and prosperous communities. Through the Union Cities effort, central labor councils and local unions are building a grassroots movement with political, organizing and membership mobilization that involves the community every step of the way. Key to member mobilization are Street Heat actions—such as the June 24 rallies, which caught the attention of the media from coast to coast. Central labor councils involved in the Union Cities initiative spearheaded June 24 "Day to Make Our Voices Heard" actions in more than 70 cities to battle anti-union efforts and support the right of workers to organize. The goal of Union Cities and local unions involved in organizing is to rebuild workers' power to fight back against anti-union employers by increasing membership and showing communities their stake in workers' rights to mobilize new allies.

"The last great challenge that brought labor in coalition with its community was the civil rights movement," says Machinists President Thomas Buffenbarger. "We're trying to revive the labor movement and that means we're looking to organize. So we have to go out to the same people and tell them that the right to organize—the right to speak out in one unified voice—must be recognized as the last unsecured civil right." Buffenbarger chairs the AFL-CIO Executive Council's state and local central labor council committee.

Building coalitions to last

Successfully building coalitions means strategically choosing partners, making connections early, ensuring the relationship is reciprocal, emphasizing workers, framing issues for broad appeal and recognizing that coalition-building can be a long process.

Building long-lasting community coalitions requires central labor councils and unions to choose the right partners—those that share common goals with working people and are willing to share resources. The community services network, which forms partnerships with local organizations, is a major resource for connecting unions to the community. Coalition-building is instrumental not only in building momentum for organizing campaigns, but also in creating a network that supports workers in all aspects of their lives and livelihoods.

In 1991, the Milwaukee Central Labor Council began building the Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee, a coalition of unions, community and religious groups, and elected officials. The initial impetus for the coalition was the desire to build political power at the grassroots level and to create well-paying jobs. When Sustainable Milwaukee was launched, the coalition created task forces on living wages, the environment and transportation. Another key component in building Sustainable Milwaukee was the Central City Workers Center. Created under a partnership of the coalition and the Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades Council. the center trains and places job seekers in high- 줄 tech and manufacturing positions. Through the center, unions gained

access to new workers even before beginning organizing campaigns and built credibility in the poor communities, says John Goldstein, secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee CLC.

Like most good coalitions, Sustainable Milwaukee provides something for all its members. When statewide workfare was instituted, the coalition fought for a living wage for all new workers, a major concern of community groups representing the poor.

In retrospect, Goldstein says that the labor council should have made connections with religious leaders early on in the planning—a common complaint of religious leaders as well.

Scinia Blaisbell

Success by degrees: The Rev. Jesse Jackson and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka join in a rally with a broad union-community coalition to convince the Omni Hotel to honor a neutrality clause with HERE.

"What I hate the most is the 'dial-a-collar' attitude some unions have," says Kim Bobo, executive director of the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice (NICWJ). "They call when they need a clergyman to pray at a rally."

"We should be involved before a union decides on an organizing drive, and I'm not talking about three weeks' notice before a rally, but before the design is done," says Dr. Jonathan Fine of the Massachusetts ICWJ.

Not a One-Way Street

Building successful community coalitions is a two-way street. Coalition partners bring needed resources to union campaigns, but they also bring their own concerns about community issues.

"You've got to show your allies that you're interested in something more than your members' paychecks if you want the coalition to last," says Fred Barnes, affiliation committee chairman of the Northern Virginia AFL-CIO.

V. Daniel Radford, executive secretary-treasurer of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO, says "you can't just ask your partners" to support your campaigns. "You won't stay partners for long that way. We meet with them on a regular basis to see what we can do for them."

Through active community services programs, central labor councils help meet the needs of both community organizations and those in need through an extensive network of services.

Many community organizations are unaware of the connection between unions and a strong community. "Unfortunately, the track record of some unions has been that we are only concerned about the workplace and not the rest of the community," says Bridgette Williams, president of the Kansas City, Mo., CLC. "Working people are more than just union members; they belong to churches, the Y[MCA], the NAACP. And each one of those groups needs our help as much as we need their help."

In Milwaukee, the central labor council joined a campaign to prevent the state takeover of the city's public schools. Working through a coalition of groups, the labor unions mobilized their members to lobby the state legislature to prevent the move. "We helped build a huge public outrage over the state telling parents of Milwaukee what they had to do with their schools," says John Goldstein, secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee CLC.

As a result, ties between unions, the African American community that makes up most of the public school student body, ministers, parents and public school teachers in Milwaukee were strengthened—and will be a valuable resource when unionists seek support for their efforts, Goldstein says. As AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson puts it: "Our communities will stand with us only if we let them know we will stand with them."

Members of religious congregations can be strong allies of the union movement because they share an interest in issues that affect working people, such as Social Security and a living wage, says Avi Lyons, national director of the Jewish Labor Committee.

Diversity

Religious communities are among the many groups unions join with in coalitions. The coalition makeup depends on the demographics and available community resources as well as the issues in individual organizing campaigns.

In Phoenix, a coalition of unions and Hispanic students formed after a teach-in at Arizona State University. "We ran into a group called MECHA [Movimiento Estudian Chicano de Aztlan], which was in touch with Hispanic students who were concerned about sweatshops," says Ted Murphree, president of the Central Arizona Central Labor Council. The students were looking for a way to express their concern and Murphree suggested actions that resulted in several rallies involving union members and students at Guess? stores in the Phoenix area. "Coalitions can touch folks you can't reach," Murphree says. "MECHA did things with students we never could do."

The relationships with community groups also must be reciprocal: Each member should share ownership of the coalition. The Miami Central Labor Council spent a year building a living wage campaign that it began in 1997 by seeking out natural allies in already existing groups such as the Wages Coalition. That group was set up to implement the city's workfare program and includes business, union and human services agency leaders. The labor council also sought support from a coalition of human services providers, and African American union members solicited help from local ministers.

June 24: The Rev. Joe Frazer, SEIU Executive Vice President Eliseo Medina and California State Assembly member Carl Washington join union members in Los Angeles to mark June 24 as the "Day to Make Our Voices Heard." **Coalition-Building:**

Unions that have developed effective, long-lasting community coalitions share a number of successful strategies. These include:

- Recognizing that coalition-building takes a long time. Treat each campaign as a building block in an ongoing process. Take the opportunity to get to know the residents in your community and let them get to know you.
- Evaluating potential partnerships. Select allies that share your goals and are prepared
 to invest time and money in the effort. Involve the AFL-CIO community services program to help find good allies.
- Making the connections early, preferably before an organizing campaign begins. It
 takes time to recruit allies, especially groups not familiar with unions. Also, the earlier
 community groups are involved in campaigns, the more helpful their support can be.
- Ensuring that relationships with community groups are truly reciprocal. Understand the interests and concerns of your partners and support them.
- Emphasizing workers, not the union. Let workers do the talking. Most people don't
 make the connection between unions and a better community, but can identify with
 individual workers.
- Framing issues in ways that appeal to the group whose support you are seeking. For example, women's groups are likely to respond to issues such as sexual harassment and gender discrimination.
- Appealing to the organization's self-interest. Emphasize ways the groups can raise their profiles and gain valuable allies for their causes by supporting workers.
- Making a solid case. Be specific about why workers are trying to organize by including facts about wages and working conditions.
- Developing a workable structure. Decide early on who will chair the coalition and how decisions will be made.
- Defining the agenda. To avoid confusion, agree from the outset on the parameters of what the coalition will do.

The living wage campaign and a parallel effort to fight privatization of city jobs are issues that the Miami coalition partners can share and sell to their various constituencies, says Cindy Hall, president of the South Florida AFL-CIO. "The people who are most affected by privatization are blacks and the working poor," she adds. By emphasizing the civil rights aspect of privatization, a theme that connects with the African American and Latino communities, the unions gain new allies for

the fight, she says, and build a strong bridge with those communities.

The Miami Central Labor Council and its affiliates also support the cause of another partner, the human resources agencies, by using their political influence to lobby for city and state investments in those agencies. These actions, in turn, benefit organizing, Hall says. "We show our partners there is strength in numbers, and if we have the numbers, it will be easier for us to help them."

The Food and Commercial Workers is establishing community outreach committees in all its regions to establish permanent contacts with community groups. "Everybody in the locals and regions belongs to some group or organization," says UFCW Vice President Mary Finger. The community groups "are in contact day in and day out with someone from the local that they know and trust." That makes it more likely that those groups will support a union campaign when asked, she says.

"Union members have always been about community—we live in communities and we work to better our communities," says Bridgette Williams, president of the Kansas City (Mo.) AFL-CIO. "But we cannot accomplish anything unless we organize and create a powerful community of workers that speak out for fairness and justice for everyone."



YOUR MISSION:

Kentucky's 4th Congressional District stretches from the Bluegrass state's northeastern border with West Virginia, where the Big Sandy River meets the Ohio, west through the river valley to Louisville's suburbs. Scattered across the district's 22 counties are 43,000 union members in 101 local unions, part of four central labor councils.

TOUNION TOUNION EMBERS

At the district's western border, across the Ohio River, the 1st Congressional District of Ohio in central Cincinnati doesn't even cover an entire county. But 38,000 union members live in that district, represented by 81 local unions and part of one central labor council.

Despite the dissimilarities, Steelworkers Local 5668 member Mike Dunlap, working in Kentucky, and Electronic Workers Local 774 member Rick Snow in Ohio—along with nearly 300 union members and officers who have volunteered as Labor '98 political coordinators—share the same goal: Find out the issues that top the concerns of working families and get them the facts and figures on where this fall's candidates in congressional, statewide and local races stand on the Working Families Agenda.

Beginning this past spring, Dunlap and Snow were among Labor '98 volunteer political coordinators who took part in an intense four-day

training at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies before fanning out across the country to lay the groundwork for the fall elections. Joining forces with local unions, central labor councils and state federations, they are talking one-on-one with working families, registering them to vote and crafting strategies to make sure they're at the polls on Election Day.

In August, Dunlap says he met the Ashland Area Labor Council and local union leaders with a simple message: "I'm here to work with you on a common goal—to talk to as many members as possible, answer their questions, get people registered, set up press conferences and events....get our agenda out front and elect the people who support us."

That strategy—multiplied in districts across the nation—could turn a Working Families Agenda from goal to reality.

Why vote?

On the national level, politicians who have spent the past four years bashing working families and their unions hold a narrow majority in the House of Representatives. In the states, anti-worker initiatives, including attacks on workers' compensation and affirmative action, as well as 36 governors' races and the control of 25 statehouses, make it critical that union members put family-friendly lawmakers to work.

On the other hand, if workers sit out this election, a shift of just a handful of U.S. Senate seats would give anti-worker senators a filibuster-proof Senate and a free ride for the radical right-wing's corporate agenda.

At dozens of AFL-CIO forums earlier this year, where working families joined with Federation and union leaders to discuss their top concerns, the issues were the same in every part of the country and in every job sector: affordable, quality health

care; a strengthened Social Security system and expanded pension coverage; fair wages, equal pay for women workers, a minimum wage that pays a living wage and fair pay and benefits for part-time workers.

When the coordinators began reaching out to local union leaders and rank-and-file members, their concerns "pretty much dovetailed," with what workers said at the forums, says Raul Sanchez, field education coordinator for AFSCME's Rocky Mountain region and one of two Colorado coordinators.

Reason to vote #1: Health care

The response to the fight over the Patients' Bill of Rights shows why affordable and quality health care is a major working family issue.

Janice Yankey, a driver at Ford Motors' Louisville, Ky., plant is Labor '98's coordinator for the state's 3rd Congressional District. She says that in her one-on-one contacts with UAW Local 862 co-workers and other union members she has met during worksite visits, "Health care is issue number one. People are tired of all the hassles and problems, not getting their coverage. They want something done."

Last summer, the House of Representatives voted on the bill, which would give families the tools to fight greedy insurance companies and giant HMOs, guarantee medical decisions made by physicians rather than HMO bureaucrats and ensure access to specialists and emergency room care. The bill lost by only five votes, showing how close we are to building a pro-working families majority.

In Cincinnati, Rick Snow, working with the labor council, distributed thousands of fliers on the Patients' Bill of Rights to Queen City

Building on the strategies behind the successful California Proposition 226 campaign, union volunteers are talking to members one-on-one, registering them to vote and working to elect candidates this fall who support a Working Families Agenda.

worksites, helped organize a press conference to get working families' message to the media, and worked with the Building Trades Council, which turned its hiring hall into a phone bank. The union member phone bank and others around the nation put 25,000 union members in touch with their lawmakers.

While legislation such as last year's child health initiative and the proposal to open Medicare to some retirees younger than 65 are important, incremental improvements won't solve the nation's fundamental health care problems: the erosion of employer-provided health care and the increase in families with no coverage at all. A working families' candidate would support legislation such as a pending Senate bill that calls for employers with 50 or more workers to pay 75 percent of a family's health insurance premiums.

Reason to vote #2: Social Security and retirement

Just as they did at the forums, workers are telling political coordinators visiting worksites that they're worried about Social Security and pensions. So much so that the AFL-CIO and its affiliate unions are launching a grassroots mobilization campaign to strengthen Social Security for working families (see story, page 16).

Wall Street, the banking and financial industry and their lawmaking allies are clamoring to turn Social Security over to stockbrokers. At the same time, millions of retirees count on Social Security for their entire income. Privatized individual retirement accounts are no replacement for a system that's portable from job-to-job and doesn't run out after workers retire and acts as disability and survivor insurance as well. Despite claims to the contrary, Wall Street cannot guarantee risk-free investments that will protect workers until they die.

Social Security benefits should not be subject to the whims of the market, and private accounts should never be substituted for the benefits the system currently provides.

The next lawmakers we send to Congress will make decisions about Social Security that will affect our future, our children and our grandchildren—and it's critical those legislators support strengthening Social Security and ensure that any changes to the nation's retirement system are not made at the expense of working families.

Reason to vote #3: Pay equity, living wages and contracting-out

More than 30 years after the Equal Pay Act was passed, women, on average, still earn only 74 cents for every dollar men are paid. That makes it harder for working women and their families to pay for child care, save for educa-

tion, afford health care or even put food on the table.

The AFL-CIO's Ask a Working Woman survey in 1997 found that equal pay was a critical issue for almost 99 percent of the 50,000 respondents, but one-third said they didn't receive equal pay. In April, working women staged more than 600 demonstrations, rallies and events to mark the first-ever AFL-CIO Equal Pay Day.

One way to make sure employers abide by the equal pay laws already on the books is to provide better remedies for women who are denied equal pay and to enact tougher penalties for employers that break the law. Equal pay legislation, S. 71, was introduced last year, but has yet to see Senate action.

Thanks to drives spearheaded by unions and community allies, dozen of cities have passed living wage laws, including, most recently, Chicago. Congress should do the same with today's \$5.15 an hour minimum wage. At \$7.33 an hour, a minimum wage worker would have the same purchasing power as a worker earning the minimum wage in 1968. At today's minimum wage, a worker with a family of three, laboring 40 hours a week for 52 weeks, still would be \$2,600 below the poverty level.

Today, more than 30 percent of the workforce is employed in some kind of nonstandard work arrangement. Eighty percent of union members are concerned about the growing use of part-timers and those workers not getting benefits. The AFL-CIO has worked with unions and congressional allies to draft laws requiring employers to develop parity legislation for part-time workers to ensure they are paid at the same rate with prorated benefits. The bill, which is unlikely to come up before next year, would cover part-time, temporary and contingent workers and independent contractors—yet another reason to elect working family friendly-candidates.

Reason to vote #4: Education

Working families want their public schools to provide quality education in decent, well-equipped schools, but when there are too many students in the classroom or when the roof is leaking, children have a tough time learning. President Clinton has proposed a program to reduce overcrowding by helping local communities hire 100,000 new teachers certified to teach basic reading and math. Local communities also need help to build and renovate 5,000 schools nationwide.

But the legislation to solve these problems has been bottled up in the GOP-controlled Congress. This fall, working families can elect lawmakers who'll go to Congress and stand up for their children's education.



Caordinated: In Kentucky, Labar '98 political caardinatars, fram left: Janice Yankey and Joe Holland, Mike Dunlap and Deanna Mabelini.



Mobilized: Union members in Kentucky launch a statewide grassraats effort to register voters and mobilize members in support of a Working Families Agenda.

Reason to vote #5: Freedom to organize

Candidates seeking the votes of union members need only to look at the nationwide June 24 "Day to Make Our Voices Heard" mobilization to understand how important the right to organize is for workers who want to improve their lives by joining unions. In more than 70 cities, tens of thousands of workers shined a spotlight on the secret war in America's workplaces, unchecked by outdated and weak labor laws.

Each year, 10,000 workers are fired for trying to organize their workplaces and improve their lives. Thousands more are harassed and intimidated by their employers. Eighty percent of employers hire union-busting firms to fight organizing, and more than half threaten to eliminate workers' jobs if they vote for a union, according to research by Kate Bronfenbrenner, Cornell University Labor Education Research director. Employers are robbing workers of their right to improve their lives and futures by joining unions—and it's time to elect lawmakers who will stand with workers in support of card-check recognition elections and workers' right to organize.

One-on-one member contact

Working families care about many other issues: child care, balancing work and family responsibilities, attacks on workplace safety, making ends meet through part-time and contingent work, trade deals that bargain away

workers' rights and the environment. For example, Raul Sanchez says Colorado workers are always on guard because of the Rocky Mountain state's large and well-financed right-to-work movement, which supports anti-worker candidates and ballot initiatives. In Oregon, working families are organizing to defeat a paycheck deception measure that would silence the voice of public employees in politics.

At each of the political coordinator training sessions, AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal gave a slide show presentation outlining the goals of Labor '98. One slide said it all: "YOUR MISSION: Talk to union members."

The campaign to defeat California's Proposition 226 demonstrated how well face-to-face contact works. Early on, 70 percent of union members said they supported the cleverly worded but deceitful measure that would have slammed the door shut on working families' political rights, according to polls conducted by David Binder Research. After unions talked to their members, that support turned into a 71–29 percent vote against the measure. Although advertising played a role, the percentage of union members who voted against the measure shows just how critical one-on-one member contact is.

In fact, 90 percent of union members who

received phone calls and workplace or home visits voted against Proposition 226. Eighty-three percent of workers who were in workplace meetings or had one-to-one discussions with "No on 226" union volunteers voted against it. Workers who received leaflets but no face-to-face contact cast ballots against the measure by a 77 percent margin.

Colorado's August 11 primary gave Sanchez, the Colorado State Federation and local unions a test run for November. "We took mail ballots and explanations on how to use them to the largest 20 locals to mail to their members," Sanchez says. "I had a chance to meet with several locals. We came up with a pool of volunteers for leafleting and door-to-door work and we went over their plans. Phone banks were up." With the primary over, he says voter registration drives are under way.

It all comes down to getting the word out. "It's one-on-one, face-to-face, that makes the difference," says Sanchez.

"Pulling together with all the affiliates, getting out to the members one-to-one will give us a bigger turnout. And if we do that," Janice Yankey says, "We'll do alright."

It will take lawmakers who support a Working Families Agenda to get laws passed that will make a difference. Backers of a corporate, big business agenda are counting on low voter

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- Did you support the Patients' Bill of Rights?
- Do you support fair wages?
- Would you fight for equal pay for equal work?
- Do you support a minimum wage increase?
- Do you support the right of workers to improve their lives and futures through union membership?
- Will you fight against trade legislation that protects business at the expense of workers?
- Can we count on you to stand up for workplace safety by fighting OSHA budget cuts and supporting strong ergonomics standards?
- Will you support strengthening Social Security and fight privatization?
- Do you believe federal contractors should have their labor and worker rights records scrutinized?
- Do you believe part-time and temporary workers should be paid the same wage rate as full-time employees doing the same work?

turnout. If unions don't get out the vote, congressional representatives such as Steve Chabot in Ohio's 1st District can return to Washington. Chabot's working families voting record is an abysmal 3 percent. Or Rep. Jim Bunning, who is seeking six years in the Senate, where his 10 percent lifetime working families record would give anti-worker senators one more vote. Without union votes, there will be no opportunity to replace Bunning—who recently referred to union representatives at the Social Security Administration as "no show, go slows and who the hell knows?"—with a labor ally in Kentucky's 4th District.

"We've got a real chance here to turn this House seat 180 degrees. We can trade a Jim Bunning who voted against working families

90 percent of the time, for someone we can count on when it comes to votes on decent health care, workers rights and fair wages," Dunlap said. "And if we get enough get people motivated, educated and to the polls here in Kentucky and in Ohio or California, wherever union folks are, maybe we get Congress back on our side."

Working families all over the country face the same challenge: Vote to end four years of union-bashing, corporate-driven anti-working-family attacks. Or stay home on Nov. 3—and get ready for more of the same.

UNION MEMBER, UNION CANDIDATE

"Almost every night when I got home from work, I had three or four messages on my machine from people who said, 'Your union volunteer was here and was just great. I'm going to vote for you'" recalls Maggie Carlton, a Nevada state Senate candidate and shop steward at the Treasure Island Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

For Carlton, a member of Culinary Workers Local 226/HERE since she began waiting tables at the Treasure Island coffee shop five years ago, the Sept. 1 Democratic primary race was her first foray into politics—and she says her union involvement proved to be critical to victory.

Along with a big boost from her own local, Carlton was strongly backed by the Southern Nevada Central Labor Council and its affiliates. "Union members were volunteering on their days off, knocking on doors and making phone calls," Carlton says.

That kind of mobilization was key because unlike her opponent, Carlton—a 41-year-old mother of two—had to be out of the house by 6:15 every morning to put in a full shift. Home by 4:30 p.m. to spend time with her husband, a corrections officer, and daughters, she was soon out the door again and on the campaign trail, walking neighborhoods in her working-class district.

Mag will fight decent here.

While Las Vegas unions have mobilized workers and their families over the long-running Frontier Hotel strike, the Building Trades Organizing Project and other issues, Carlton's candidacy has helped propel members to political involvement too, says Building Trades President Rob Trenkle. A measure to silence the political voice of

working families, similar to California's Proposition 226, was set for Nevada's ballot. After the Clark County Circuit Court declared the proposed measure unconstitutional, its proponents, aware of union's mobilization might, did not appeal the court ruling.

As a result of Carlton's efforts and the multi-union volunteer mobilization, voters learned that Maggie Carlton isn't just another "out-of-touch politician," but someone who is just like they are. "I get up and go to work every day just like they do and have the same concerns they do." That's why Las Vegas working families decided that a working mother should be in the state senate.







FOR PRIVATE PRISON CORPORATIONS

n the past two decades, privatization, the contracting-out of public services, has made inroads in just about every area—social services, transportation, education—traditionally performed by cities, states and the federal government. Cashstrapped governments have been easy prey for profit-hungry cor-

porations offering elaborate promises in return for public-sector contracts. And too often, workers and taxpayers pay the price.

With privatized corrections facilities now in 27 states, and the capacity of private prisons predicted to more than double in the next four years, prison privatization offers a key example of the costs of contracting-out.

Public oversight is one of the first casualties. Contracting-out the oversight and housing of convicted criminals inserts another layer of bureaucracy between inmates and taxpayers, hides incarceration problems from public scrutiny and deprives communities of the oversight and control needed for public safety. Until two Oregon sex offenders escaped from a Texas processing center run by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), state and local officials were led to believe that illegal immigrants—not convicted felons—were being held there, according to a report by AFSCME United, which represents 100,000 corrections officers.

"Understaffing, low wages, less-qualified staff, poorer benefits and inferior working conditions are common business practices within private facilities," says the report. "While costs appear to be lower, the public ultimately pays for this 'savings.' Documented escapes of rapists and murderers, rioting and inmate abuse in prisons run by private companies have jeopardized the safety of communities and increased the bottom line for taxpayers."

Financially, states stand to lose—despite claims by private contractors that they're saving taxpayer dollars. Private firms are adept at squeezing more profits out of their contracts with devices that would not survive the

scrutiny public agencies routinely face. The Oklahoma legislature, for example, found that the state was paying 45 percent more to incarcerate inmates at the private Davis Correctional Facility in Holdenville than at a comparable state-owned facility.

With their income frequently specified by contracts, management companies have been resourceful in boosting their profits by shifting expenses back to the states-making it difficult for the public to see the cost overruns. In Florida, for example, the state picks up the medical tab once a prisoner's health care costs exceed \$7,500. In Tennessee, inmates infected with AIDS and HIV frequently are transferred from private to state facilities. North Carolina lawmakers found that the for-profit U.S. Corrections Corporation, one of several businesses that have tapped into the privatization market, hired 68 correctional officers to oversee 528 inmates, compared with the 141 the state would have employed.

"Private firms are basically profit-oriented," says John Butler, a corrections officer for nine years in Moravia, N.Y., and board member of AFSCME Council 82. "As a state agency, we're more concerned with lives and property. Our whole thing is the communities in which we live—that's our utmost concern."

Butler says that for the most part, state agencies provide better training than private contractors. "We use the by-the-book approach," he says. "They use a rule of thumb."

Communities are fighting back against the proliferation of private prisons that are reaping tax breaks while endangering public safety. When CCA paid \$1.8 million less in wages and benefits at one Tennessee site than the state paid at comparable prisons, legislators pulled a bill that would have allowed privatization of up to 70 percent of the state's prison system.

Residents in Grafton, Ohio, who are combating a CCA proposal to create a prison there, have been mobilized by the knowledge of what happened to their neighbors in Youngstown, where the government exchanged 101 acres of land and a 10-year, 75 percent tax abatement

for the promise of new jobs.

Youngstown didn't get what it bargained for, according to the AFSCME report. After receiving millions of dollars in tax breaks, CCA sold the taxpayer-provided land to its own real estate investment trust—and reaped a cool \$70 million for its investments. The school board is filing suit to stop the decimation of a budget financed by taxes CCA won't pay. Prison management denies that violence exists—yet routinely denies access to law enforcement personnel investigating prison killings and stabbings. The facility, which was built as a medium-security lockup, houses violent felons brought in from the Washington, D.C., area.

"They deceived everybody about the kinds of inmates, about the dangers they present," says Peter Wray of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association/AFSCME Local 11. Meanwhile, "they're laying off corrections officers in Washington, D.C."

In July, six Washington, D.C., felons escaped from the Youngstown facility—a security breach that even CCA couldn't hide. Ohio's governor proposed shutting down the privatized facility.

The trend to privatize prisons reflects a broader push toward privatization across the country. Whatever the industry, the results are the same: cost overruns; underestimated oversight expenditures; widespread cost-shifting and high turnover of an underpaid, undertrained workforce.

"The Youngstown facility is not an anomaly," says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee. "Forprofit prisons are chiefly concerned with turning a profit. When disturbances and escapes arise, it is the taxpayers who must once again foot the bill.

"How many inmates have to escape or be murdered to reveal the problems when a profit motive is part of prison incarceration?"

—David Kameras

Should Crime Pay?: A Review of the Evidence, is available free from AFSCME Publications at 202-429-1130.



SUBSTITUTE SUPPLIES SOCIAL SECURITY

for Working Families

The October America@work will feature a three-part story on Social Security designed for reproduction in union publications. The series will take a look at Social Security and the options for strengthening the system, highlight the tactics designed to weaken and destroy Social Security—while showing who's behind the attacks—and map out a fight-back strategy for union activists.

ational leaders will be making decisions in the coming months that will determine the future of Social Security—and affect every working family profoundly. Will America continue to ensure a decent standard of living for our seniors, people who become disabled and children whose parents die? Or will we gamble our future security with untested, profit-driven notions?

Why Every Working Family Should Care About Social Security

Social Security is *the* retirement plan for America's workers and their families.

• Two-thirds of older Americans rely on Social Security for 50 percent or more of their income in retirement, and 30 percent rely on it for 90 percent or more of their income. Only about one-third receive private pensions.

Social Security is not just a pension plan. It is a family protection plan, too, with benefits that cover all generations.

- Social Security guarantees retirement benefits and acts as life and disability insurance for the 96 percent of American workers who contribute to the system and the families of those workers. Today, Social Security is a lifeline delivering monthly benefits to more than 43 million people, including:
 - 30 million retired workers and dependents,

- 6 million disabled workers and dependents, and
- 7 million survivors of workers who have died.

Social Security's benefits are essential to keeping tens of millions of older Americans out of poverty.

• Without Social Security, more than half of the elderly would be in poverty.

Social Security works—and we can strengthen it to keep it working.

• Social Security can pay all obligated benefits until 2032. After 2032, Social Security will be able to pay 70 percent of benefits—even if no changes are made. By strengthening Social Security now, we can ensure its protections are there for today's workers, our children and our grandchildren.

SOURCES: Contribution rate: The Century Foundation, Social Security Reform: A Century Foundation Guide to the Issues, The Century Foundation Press, 1998. Beneficiaries: Social Security Administration, Office of Research, Evaluation and Statistics, Fast Facts & Figures About Social Security 1997, June 1997.

Today's Unions: Mobilizing to Strengthen Social Security

The AFL-CIO and affiliate unions are mobilizing members in a massive grass-roots campaign to make working families' voices heard on Social Security.

We will inform our members and give them opportunities to speak out...

- At trainings, including a national strategy/training session in Washington, D.C., and at union conventions, worksites and union halls.
- At teach-ins and forums, in conjunction with partners and targeted to specific groups and regions, including women, people of color and young people.
- By forming local speakers' bureaus.

We will get working families' message out through the media...

- With paid advertising.
- With sample articles, op-eds and letters to

the editor.

- Through editorial board meetings.
- With articles and ads for union publications.

We will make our voices heard...

- By talking to friends and neighbors.
- By urging candidates to pledge to Strengthen Social Security for Working Families, and holding accountability sessions with elected leaders.
- By hosting congressional call-in days in October.
- By visiting and sending letters and postcards to members of Congress.
- By meeting with new members of Congress in November.

Social Security Principles

The AFL-CIO is committed to enacting reforms to address the system's shortfall and assure the integrity of the program. We believe any proposed solution must honor seven fundamental principals:

- Steps must be taken soon to strengthen Social Security so that all Americans can be assured that the program will be there for them.
- Social Security should continue to provide retired and disabled workers, as well as dependents and survivors, with a guaranteed monthly benefit, protected against inflation, for life.
- Benefits should not be subject to the whims of the market, and private accounts should never be substituted for the core-defined benefits the system currently provides.
- The age at which workers are eligible for early or full benefits should not be raised.
- Social Security should continue to replace a larger share of past earnings for lowincome workers and to provide bigger benefits to workers who earned higher wages during their careers. Replacement rates should not be cut.
- Social Security should continue to provide family insurance protection, with benefits that cover dependent and surviving children and spouses in addition to disabled and retired workers.
- Government budget surpluses should be used to save Social Security first, not to pay for tax cuts.

From August 5, 1998, AFL-CIO Executive Council Statement.

Join the campaign to Strengthen Social Security for Working Families.

For campaign materials or more information, call toll free at 1-877-760-2340. To register for the November strategy/training session, call 202-637-5018.



LEADERSHIP

The face of the labor movement is beginning to change to reflect the growing number of women and people of color joining its ranks.

In July, UFCW elected Sarah Palmer Amos as an executive vice president and named Vice President Patricia Scarcelli as political director. Amos, the union's only woman executive vice president, will serve as executive assistant to President Doug Dority. Susan Phillips, UFCWs publications director, was named vice president and replaced Scarcelli as women's director.

Also in July, RWDSU elected two people of color to top posts. Charlie Hall Sr., an African American, was named secretary-treasurer. The convention also created the new post of recorder and chose Amelia Tucker, a Latina, to fill the job. Union delegates also created a new advisory board to the executive board as a way of increasing minority and female representation, says President Stuart Appelbaum. Later that month, the Letter Carriers elected Jane Broendel as assistant secretary-treasurer, the first time a woman has held a national headquarters office.

AFT elected Nat LaCour, an African American, to the newly created post of executive vice president. LaCour has served as both president of United Teachers of New Orleans and AFT vice president since 1972.

The Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers elected Jeanne Graham as vice president and created a women's advisory committee. The Maintenance of Way Employes appointed a committee to recommend ways of increasing representation of women and people of color.

And at its convention the Steelworkers announced the appointment of Sharon Stiller to the new post of assistant to the president for women's affairs. The delegates also passed a resolution calling on locals to create women's committees.

Earlier this summer, the Office and Professional Employees elected 11 women to its 21-member international executive board, giving women a voting majority. A week later, the UAW elected an African American, Ruben Burks, as secretary-treasurer for the first time in the union's history, and Geraldine Ochocinska as the first female regional director.

"Labor in the 21st century must reflect the faces of diversity because tomorrow's membership will be predominantly people of color and women," says AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, the first person of color to serve as a principal officer of the Federation.

"Women have to be more involved in their unions if we expect to organize the 50 million women workers," OPEIU President Michael Goodwin says. "We're asking them to come inand they want to know if they're going to be just part of the landscape or real decision-makers."

Even though 70 percent of OPEIU's members are women, bringing more women into the union's top ranks "was never going to happen automatically," Goodwin says. To accomplish the change, it was necessary for OPEIU leaders to make a concerted effort to diversify leadership, and the steps they took are instructive.

First, Goodwin and the other officers made clear that they supported the changes. After the 1995 convention passed a resolution calling for more women on the board, OPEIU jump-started the process by naming two women to fill vacant seats. Second, the board was expanded from 15 to 21 members over a three-year span to gain more gender and ethnic diversity. In 1998, the convention voted to elect all vice presidents regionally, which opened up more opportunities for women, who make up the voting majority in many regions.

"Without the officers' support and encouragement and concerted effort to find women to fill vacancies, we would not have seen the changes take place as rapidly as they did," says OPEIU Vice President Anita Roy from Minneapolis, noting that only three women were on the board in 1995. "From 1995 to 1998, that is a radical change in only three years."

Involving women and people of color in leadership is critical to the future of the union movement. The percentage of women union members has doubled from 20 percent in 1960 to 39.4 percent of all union members in 1997, according to labor researcher Kate Bronfenbrenner. Women are the clear majority of all workers being newly organized. Win rates in units where women are concentrated average 51 percent. The highest win rates, where workers choose the union in more than 60 percent of campaigns, are in industries such as health care, social services, education and entertainment, where women and people of color predominate.

Recognizing the growth of a more diverse workforce, the AFL-CIO in 1995 created the executive vice president post and expanded the size of the Executive Council to include more women and people of color. Currently, 14 women or people of color are on the AFL-CIO Executive Council. The Federation also held an historic Full Participation Conference in March, where constituency groups and internationals mapped out plans to increase union diversity and to organize for economic justice.

More women and people of color are holding elective office in other affiliated unions as well. Fifty percent of AFT's 38-member executive board are women and people of color. AFSCME's 33-member executive board includes 11 women and people of color, and of the 33 UNITE executive board members, 14 are women or people of color.

-James Parks

GUNVENIII

A D V A N C I N G O R G A N I Z I N G

UNIONS BACK STEPPED-UP ORGANIZING AT 1998 CONVENTIONS

The goal to make organizing the top priority

of the labor movement resounded at union conventions across the country this summer, as delegates overwhelmingly voted for recommendations committing their time, energy and resources to organizing.

In a massive boost for new organizing, delegates to the Steel-workers convention voted in August to create a special organizing fund and to triple the union's organizing budget, making organizing one-third of the union's total budget by 2000.

Speaking at the Las Vegas convention, USWA Local 418G member Marvin Weyer described the choices faced by the union movement as "organize or die"—and said that he is "not ready to die." "We have to keep this thing going," Weyer told the Las Vegas gathering.

The delegates approved an organizing fund recommended by a union task force that received input from 400 union members and staff at all 13 USWA districts prior to the convention. The task force recommended that beginning in January, the fund be supported by a monthly dues payment of one cent per hour, followed by a two-cent-an-hour increase in 2000—with the goal to organize 100,000 new members by 2002.

Half of the fund will finance district organizing plans, including assistance for local union organizing programs; 25 percent will help support industry-wide, multi-district organizing programs; and another 25 percent is earmarked for ongoing training and development of local union organizers.

Meanwhile, delegates to AFSCME's late August convention approved a per capita dues increase of 50 cents a year for two years. Organizing public employees, says AFSCME Organizing Director Paul Booth, requires new strategies. "Now we will follow the work where privatization is a fact of life," Booth says. AFSCME has also set its sights on suburban counties and rural local governments that have collective bargaining laws but have been difficult to organize in the past. "We want our affiliates to set up organizing departments and set goals for themselves," Booth adds.

Tailoring its strategies to the challenges of privatization is also the top priority of the Postal Workers' newest organizing campaign. Last year, delegates passed a resolution to organize postal workers in the private sector. The union laid the groundwork two years ago when it launched a private-sector organizing fund with a 20-cent-per-member special assessment. With \$2.5 million now in that fund, "it gets us pointed in the right direction," says Frank Romero, national organization director. APWU, together with the Communications Workers, seeks to organize workers at a mailbag and container repair facility in North Carolina. The union also is planning a campaign at a Denver call center that was

Organized: George Becker, USWA president, speaks to union delegates who approved a massive increase in organizing.

contracted-out, and seeks to support six local organizing campaigns a year as well as work with postal unions in Mexico.

Also this summer, The Food and Commercial Workers launched a nationwide campaign to organize poultry plant workers in the southeast and in Maryland, Delaware and California. Working in isolated rural areas with few job opportunities, the thousands of primarily immigrant workers endure unsafe working conditions for low pay and no benefits. Each UFCW delegate signed a poultry justice support card, pledging to use "my voice, my vote and my consumer dollar to support poultry workers." The UFCW is helping 100 local unions and regional coordinators set up poultry justice alliances with religious groups to create a critical community support foundation for card-check campaigns. "You can't organize in a vacuum," says Greg Denier, assistant to UFCW President Douglas Dority.

At its annual convention in June, Office and Professional Employees pledged to boost the number of regional organizing cooperatives (ROCs) from 10 to 15 by January. ROCs provide tailored volunteer training. "Every time you organize a group, it piques interest and breeds other leads," says OPEIU Organizing Director Jay Porcaro.

Meanwhile, Theatrical Stage Employees announced plans to hire an organizing director to monitor campaigns nationally, while the UAW added a fifth vice president, Bob King, to its leadership roster to head up new member organizing.

And in July, Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers held an awards ceremony for 71 locals active in the union's rank-and-file organizing program in which workers take a temporary leave of absence from their jobs to become full-time organizers.

"We and all unions have to expand our membership to maintain our strength in bargaining and our political power," says Steelworkers Communications Director Charles Robideau.

"People need resources, materials and time off to do the organizing. The money represents the commitment to engage our members in this effort. Organizing is not going to be done by money, it is going to be done by people."

—Laureen Lazarovici

Shopicill

ORGANIZERS' TOOLKIT

ore and more union organizers and negotiators are turning to the Internet to uncover corporate facts and figures

to uncover corpor for organizing campaigns, negotiations and rankand-file communications. Internet research can be an ideal tool for organizers who need information quickly—and often late at night. Free corporate information is available by researching multiple sites. But saving research time sometimes requires paying user fees to access a site that offers all or most of the key information.

A reliable Internet provider can maximize efficiency. Other key tools are a fast modem (with a minimum speed of 28.8) and a credit card to access fee-paid sites or establish accounts. For organizers without computers or Internet service, local libraries often offer free computer use—just make sure to bring a box of 3.5-inch computer disks to download information.

Many computer-savvy unionists already use Internet search engines, programs that "search" websites for information based on a keyword or series of keywords, to unearth corporate data, but

search engines are limited—they reportedly cover less than 30 percent of Internet sites. A more direct approach is to access individual business- and government-related websites and look for information based on the names of the business or corporate officers.

An Internet search can locate public information that includes company profiles, articles of incorporation, officers and their ties to outside companies, financial reports, violations of state and federal regulations, court cases and news items from general media and trade publications.

Begin with www.hoovers.com to get quick

information on public companies. The site has free information on 13,000 U.S. firms—data on sales, employees, officers, addresses, phone numbers and a brief description of each company. Additional data are available for a fee. For the full details on a company, read the annual 10-K and quarterly 10-Q filings at the Securities and Exchange Commission's sites at either www.sec.gov; edgar.stern. nyu.edu; www.whowhere. com/EDGAR or www. freeedgar.com. To learn about the company's officers, go to people.edgar-online.

com/people.
At www.corporateinformation.com, hundreds of Internet links describe information available and indicate whether user fees are charged. Included are links for researching public and private companies, and links by industry and region.

The AFL-CIO Paywatch site provides the salaries of the top chief executive officers of major companies

and maps their ties t each others' boardrooms: www.paywatch.org.

Another helpful site is www.knowx.com, which can be searched for a fee during business hours or for free after 6 p.m. (there is a separate fee for downloading information).

Other useful fee-based sites include: www.dnb.com (Dun & Bradstreet), which provides credit and financial information, and www.wsj.com (Wall Street Journal), which includes access to the Dow Jones News Retrieval's 3,600 publications.

Before starting an Internet search, it's critical to remember the warnings of organizers who say they have spent an hour or more searching the Internet for information they could have located with one or two phone calls.

WEBSITES FOR CORPORATE RESEARCH

The AFL-CIO Corporate Affairs Department recommends the following websites for organizers, negotiators, and any unionist researching corporate facts and figures.

BUSINESS INFORMATION

www.paywatch.org—Part of the AFL-CIO website, Paywatch tracks the salaries of top CEOs and enables you to determine how long it would take an employee of the company to earn what the CEO makes in a year.

pathfinder.com/fortune/fortune500—Summaries of revenues, profits, assets and other data on Fortune 500 companies.

www.companiesonline.com—Corporate summaries; search by stock ticker symbol; covers more than 60,000 public and private companies.

www.mediainfo.com—To find information on private companies, scroll to "Media Info Links Online Media Directory," click on newspapers and then the state to search for information.

MEGA-SEARCH ENGINES

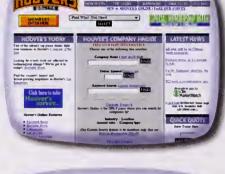
www.dogpile.com—Multiple searches of the Web, Usenet, business and news wires.

www.search.com—Check under "Business News" for links to other sites.

www. isleuth.com—Good site for searches, including business, people, news, etc.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- www.wsrn.com
- www.investquest.com
- · www.stocksmart.com
- www.researchmag.com/invcstor.htm
- www.prars.com
- www.w100.com
- www.reportgallery.com







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• www.mediainfo.com

- amcity.com
- www.newsalert.com

LEGAL AND REGULATORY

- rtk.net
- www.afscme.org/ (click on Labor Links)
- www.lawguru.com/caselaw.html
- www.law.vill.edu/Fed-Ct/fedcourt.html
- www.law.vill.edu/State-Ct/
- www.sec.gov/enforce.htm
- securities.stanford.edu/
- www.nlrb.gov/
- www.osha.gov/oshstats/

ZDITZITATZ

- www.census.gov/datamap/www/index.html
- stat.bls.gov/blshome.html
- www.fedstats.gov
- ww.lib.umich.edu/libhome/Documents.center/govwebnew.html
- www.piperinfo.com/state/states.html.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Q. A worker in our unit who gets in trouble with management occasionally chooses to bypass his union steward and tries to settle these situations directly with management. Then the union gets called into the situation late to save him from discipline. What legal risks does this worker create for himself and his union by not involving his union in disciplinary actions from the beginning?

A. The worker should get the union steward involved from the beginning. The steward may be more familiar with the contract, past practices and how other similar incidents have been resolved. The steward can help make sure the worker is treated fairly and that any settlement or resolution protects the interests of the worker and the entire bargaining unit. By not involving the steward early on, the worker may, depending on the contract, lose the right to file a formal grievance.

Q. I'm going to help my local get out the union vote this election year. Some workers I know support one candidate based on the candidate's stand on one issue, even though the candidate usually votes against legislation that helps working families. What can I tell them that will make a difference?

A. Often voters, including some of our members, buy into candidates' rhetoric on a single issue. The most effective way to make a case for other candidates is to have the facts on where all candidates stand on working family issues. It also helps to contrast candidates' campaign rhetoric with their anti-worker voting records. Build suppart for union-endorsed candidates by comparing all candidates' pasitions and voting records. Worker-to-worker, issue-based voter education is the most successful way to elect candidates who suppart a Working Families Agenda.

What's your question?

Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@work, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010. Fax: 202-508-6908. E-moil: otwork@aflcio.org

UNION LINE

Appealing Appliances

merica's labor movement heralded the benefit of buying union-made products and services during the recent Union Labor Week, September 7–13. For homeowners planning to buy new kitchen appliances (refrigerators, ranges and microwave ovens)—whether part of a new home purchase, kitchen renovation or single replacement purchase—the only way to ensure you're buying quality products is to look for the union label. Following are the brand names of appliances union-made in America (dishwashers, trash compactors and garbage disposals will be covered in a future issue of America@work.):

Refrigerators: Amana, Caloric and Modern Maid brands by Amana Refrigeration Inc. (Machinists); Frigidaire, Gibson, Kelvinator and White-Westinghouse by Frigidaire Co. (UAW); GE, Hotpoint and Pencrest by General Electric (Electrical Workers, Teamsters, Operating Engineers, Sheet Metal Workers); Maytag, Magic Chef, Admiral Designer Series (Montgomery Ward), Crosley and Jenn-Aire by Maytag Corp. (SMW, IAM, IBT, Office and Professional Employees); Northland and Marvel brand freezers by

Northland Corp. (IBT, UAW); Econocold by Refrigerator Manufacturers Inc. (SMW); Whirlpool by Whirlpool Corp. (Electronic Workers, Paperworkers, Boilermakers); White-Westinghouse, Electrolux and Frigidaire by White-Westinghouse Electric Co. (Electronics Workers, UAW, IAM).

Ranges, Stoves, Ovens, Microwave Ovens: Amana, Caloric and Modern Maid by Amana Refrigeration Inc. (IAM); Comstock Castle ranges and ovens by Comstock Castle Stove Co. (Boilermakers); White-Westinghouse by White Consolidated Inc. (IAM, IUE, UAW); Hotpoint, Spacemaker, Lift Top, Profile Line and Radiant Range by General Electric (IUE); Broil King by Hudson Standard Corp. (IBT); Premier, Eagle, Heritage, Mark Royal, Modern Chef, Roper (for Whirlpool) and Holiday (for Lowes), by Peerless-Premier Appliance Co. (Boilermakers, IAM, Glass, Molders and Plastics Workers); Roper by Roper Corp. (IAM); Thermador and Masco by Thermador Corp. (IBT, Boilermakers); White-Westinghouse by White-Westinghouse Electric Co. (IAM, UAW, IUE); Wolf Range and Wolf Gourmet by Wolf Range (Boilermakers); Tappan by WCI Range Division of AB Electrolux (Steelworkers).



Union Disaster Relief Fund Aids Teacher

orine Phelan, an elementary school teacher in upstate New York, was finishing up schoolwork at her home one night when a tornado hit, ripping the roof off her house.

"Everything was twisted, mixed up and broken," she says of the May disaster. Phelan's house had to be demolished.

Her story came to the attention of local and state teacher union officials, who swiftly swung into action. Walter Dunn, vice president of New York State United Teachers/AFT, gave her a \$1,000 check, while a reporter for the union newspaper arranged to replace her cherished autographed copy of *Amazing Grace*, Jonathan Kozol's account of the lives of poor children.

"I was amazed at what my union did for me," says Phelan, a nineyear teaching veteran. "I'm just a first grade teacher paying my union dues. I never thought I'd use my union."

Now, Phelan, whose house is being rebuilt, is featured in a video for new members, telling how her union, an AFT affiliate, helped her at a critical time.

The extra help from Phelan's union came from an emergency relief fund NYSUT set up during the devastating ice storms that hit the northeast last January and February. After contributing \$25,000 to the Red Cross, the union put \$75,000 into a separate fund for members to help pay for losses not covered by insurance and government disaster aid. The union plans to maintain the fund, which contributed \$65,000 to members last winter.

The recent series of weather-related catastrophes spurred the union to initiate a project to help members, says Rob Roy, NYSUT accounting and finance manager. "This is what the union is all about."



IAM CARES

n Oregon, 600 welfare recipients, required to find jobs after two years of benefits, are getting a helping hand with job skills through IAM Cares, the human services arm of the Machinists.

The program, launched in July, targets welfare recipients with at least four barriers to employment. The first goal is to find jobs for the clients, then assist them with training so they can move to higher-paying jobs, says Ruth Ann Cox-Carothers, IAM Cares national director. "Our services are going to be really personalized and we will be working with whole families." Program staff will be networking with other agencies to provide the range of services these families need, says Cox-Carothers.

IAM Cares designed and ran an 18-month welfare-to-work pilot pro-

gram in conjunction with the state and Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Ore., before obtaining federal support to expand its services. Now a full-fledged program funded by a three-year, \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, IAM Cares has hired staff and enrolled clients in four states. including Missouri, where the Kansas City program will be launched in September. The union has applied for a grant to add programs in five other states. At each site, the IAM Cares staff works directly with state welfare caseworkers to identify individuals' employment barriers. In Oregon, the program's goal is to get 140 of the 600 welfare-to-work recipients into unsubsidized employment paying at least \$300 a week.

The welfare-to-work program is one of a dozen IAM outreach programs, which serve dislocated workers, senior workers, veterans, minorities, women and the physically and economically disadvantaged.

The \$51 Billion QUESTION

hat do you do when the assets of the world's 358 billionaires are greater than the combined incomes of countries with 45 percent of the world's population (about 3 billion people)? When you're consumer advocate Ralph Nader, you write the biggest billionaire a letter.

Nader recently wrote Microsoft CEO Bill Gates (net worth: \$51 billion and growing) urging him to join together with his friend and card-playing buddy Warren Buffet (net worth: more than \$33 billion) to sponsor, plan and lead a conference of billionaires on the subject of "national and global wealth disparities and what to do about it."

Nader suggested it would be good for billionaires who "aspire to move from success to significance" to come to grips with the problem of "distributive justice." He noted that 6 million people died last year from tuberculosis and malaria and said that the growth in "gross global GNP and capacity did not stop these diseases of poverty from their mass destruction."

Citing a new book, *The Ownership Solution*, by Jeff Gates (no relation to Bill), Nader warned that failure to cure the wealth disparity will have dire consequences for the world "fiscally, socially, politically and even environmentally."

An analysis done when Bill Gates was worth \$40 billion showed his wealth was greater than the combined net worth (including home equity, pen-

sions, mutual funds and 401(k) plans but not personal cars) of 40 percent of Americans, some 106 million people. Now that Gates' net

worth exceeds \$51 billion, Nader noted, it might be "fair to assume that the mostly second-hand cars of these 106 million Americans can now be included—and then some."



Television A Look at 'Livelyhood'

"Honey, We Bought the Company," the third installment of the PBS series "Livelyhood," premiered Sept. 4 and will air throughout the month (check local listings for local broadcast times).

Humorist Will Durst hosts the half-hour program, which looks at how UNITE Local 1856 members in Biddeford, Maine, joined with their union, local banks and factory managers to buy out the owner of a profitable blanket factory who sought to move the jobs south in a scheme to boost stock prices. The strategy saved 350 union jobs.

Another segment visits a Montana aluminum plant where USWA members exchanged a 21 percent pay cut for a one-to-one profit-sharing agreement. The deal eventually worked out, but only after USWA

workers waged a six-year court battle with the owners, winning \$97 million.

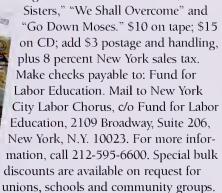
"Livelyhood" is a production of the Working Group, which created the award-winning series "Not in Our Town" and "We Do The

Work." Livelyhood Tool Kits and program tapes to promote a national dialogue about work-related issues are available by contacting The Working Group at 510-268-9675 or visiting its Internet website, www.livelyhood.org.

Recording On the March

On the March: Songs of Struggle and Inspiration, by the New York City Labor Chorus, features a chorus of 100 workers from more than a dozen New York City local unions, and special guest artists Pete Seeger and Guy Davis. The multi-ethnic, multi-generational chorus performs songs of union struggles and social protest. The workers' cultural diversity is reflected

through the selection of gospel, jazz, classical and folk music. The 16 songs include "Union Brothers, Union





Publications

They Get Cake, We Eat Crumbs: The Real Story Behind Today's Unfair Economy, by Jonathan Tasini, examines the myths

THEY
ET CAKE,
WE EAT
CRUMBS

THE REAL STORY
IND TODAY'S UNFAIR
ECONOMY
A Proper of the Promote Course
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and Tasini, examines the myths and realities of today's economy and tells why workers are losing the battle to the wealthy and corporate America. Tasini, president of the National Writers Union (UAW Local 1981) since 1990, attempts to demystify basic economic assumptions that are "heaped upon most folks, via the mass media." For more information, contact the Preamble Center at 202-265-3263.

The 1998 supplement to *Construction Organizing*, published by the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Dept., AFL-CIO Education Dept. and the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, is now available. \$5 each; \$4 each for five or more copies. To order the 150-page supplement, call Carrie Spruill at the George Meany Center at 301-431-5404. The supplement accompanies the third edition of the manual, *Construction Organizing: An*

Organizing and Contract Enforcement Guide, published in July 1997. Copies of that manual are available for \$15 each or \$12 each for five or more copies. The manual and supplement provide a step-by-step guide to the latest strategies for organizing, winning recognition, contract language and enforcement.

Stolen Dreams:

Portraits of Working Children, by David L. Parker with Lee Engfer and Robert Conrow, is a moving photo essay that explores the lives and faces of child labor around the world. The 112-page book's contemporary look at child labor features more than 50 black-and-white photographs and examines the cause and extent of child labor, its impact on its victims and steps to take to aid millions of child laborers. The book begins with the inspirational activism of 12-year-old lqbal Masih of Pakistan, who became a voice for millions of child workers. He was murdered in 1995, and



his assailant was never found. An excellent book for adults and children ages 10 and up. \$19.95 hardback. Contact Lerner Publications Co., Customer Service and Shipping, 1251 Washington Ave. North, Minneapolis, Minn. 55401 or phone 800-328-4929.

Unions and Workplace Reorganization, edited by Bruce Nissen, critically

reviews trends in workplace reorganization and develops perspectives on how unions should respond to these trends. The collection of 11 essays centers around the AFL-CIO's 1994 policy statement, *The New American Workplace: A Labor Perspective.* Writers compare the statement to those produced by European unions; examine employee involvement programs; explore changes in the public-sector workplace, including state and local government experiences and provide "from the field" commentaries. \$22.95 from Wayne State University Press at 800-WSU-READ.

These are not strangers.
They are our children, our parents, our grandparents.









Sometimes politicians look past our faces when they're looking for our votes. But it's plain as day who's hurting and who's got the most at stake in this election. It's people we know and love. Our votes can make a big difference for them.

In August, the House voted down a Patients' Bill of Rights proposal that would have guaranteed that doctors, not HMO bureaucrats, make medical decisions.

The bill lost by only five votes.

When you vote on November 3, make sure Congress won't make the same mistake in the future. Find out where your candidates stand on health care.

Protection from Greedy HMOs—
It's Our Right.

Vote November





Ideas and Views From You

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

(a) "The AFL-CIO's effort to move forward with national programs and issue campaigns is working and will result in a stronger voice for working families throughout the world.

"An important part of this effort is to help our members and the public to understand the nature of the opposition. The relentless efforts to silence our voice in politics and to deny unorganized workers the opportunity for a free and clear chance to choose union representation must be brought to light. The emphasis on the connection between politics and organizing, both in relation to new members and within the union fold, is essential."—James Andrews, president, North Carolina State AFL-CIO, Raleigh, N.C.

BUILDING TRADES' SCHOOL-TO-WORK

@ "Last summer, the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council continued its partnership with the Great Oaks Vocational Schools, with the goal of educating junior high students about the building trades and apprenticeship programs. The School-to-Work program involves eighth-grade students, [who] received hands-on training and help in making a decision about their futures. Their parents saw organized labor at work. Teachers learned about apprenticeship. And the school got a storage barn."—Dan Radford, executive secretary-treasurer, Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council

A UNION DRIVE AGAINST ALL RULES

@ "Machinists Union District Lodge 190 scored a big win...at LTD Ceramics, a company that provides machined ceramic parts for the major computer chip makers in the United States and Asia. The 240 immigrant workers began circulating a petition before they contacted the IAM. The union drive went against all the rules. The workers, many from countries where democratic freedoms don't exist, organized secretly within their own nationalities. Many of the leaders had spent time in their former countries behind bars for political activity.

"Some of the issues were forced straight time for working scheduled holidays...no raises after good reviews, being cheated out of overtime, supervisor abuses. Workers were required 🔊 to [work with] barillium and aluminum nitrate, known carcinogens, without protection.

"We have elected our committee, and negotiations have begun...." -Mike Munoz, organizer, IAM District Lodge 190, Oakland, Calif.

UNIONS MUST MOBILIZE FOR NOV. 3

@ "It saddens me and should sadden everyone in Florida about low voter turnout, which came to under 12 percent in Florida's September 1 primary. Local unions must take an 'out front-in your face' active role, educate their members and take advantage of this slump at the polls.

"There is an uncanny parallel in our membership between our level of activism and our dwindling numbers, fewer and fewer jobs, weaker benefits and lower pay. We must encourage and initiate activity in every union hall at every meeting."—Michele "Chele" Nemo, president, Palm Beach-Treasure Coast, AFL-CIO (Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee Counties)



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E-mail: atwark@aflcia.arg Internet: http://www.aflcia.arg



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SAY WHAT?/HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

TO USING THE UNION DIFFERENCE FACT SHEETS TO GET THE WORD **OUT TO WORKERS:**

@ "We passed out 2,000 copies of Union Difference' at a recent Bread and Roses Festival."—Kenneth Harkins Sr., president, Lawrence-Haverhill-Newburyport Central Labor Council (Mass.)

"We used 'Union Difference' in the Guild Reporter. It's a distinction we've been making for years, both in organizing and mobilizing. It also doesn't hurt to put it out in a visual, graphic way."—Linda Foley, president, The Newspaper Guild/CWA

Say What?

What strategies worked best in your union's get-out-the-vote effort?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

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815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org

Jablonski (Publications Director); Tula Cannell (Editor); Mike Hall, David Kameras, James B. Parks (Assistont Editors); Arlee C. Green, Laureen Lazarovici (Staff Writers); Barbara Parker (Capy Editor). Design: The Magazine Group, Inc. Capyright © AFL-CIO 1998. Na partian of this publication may be reproduced by anyone other than an affiliate of the AFL-CIO without express written permissian.

Mitchell (Assistant to the President for Public Affairs); Donna M.

sontents



IT'S TIME TO VOTE

> Working family issues depend on voter turnout in the November elections—and on unionists' efforts to get out the vote



SOCIAL SECURITY: FIX IT. DON'T DESTROY IT.

> Three articles take a look at Social Security—what it currently provides, why Wall Street wants to privatize it and how union activists can ensure that changes made to keep Social Security sound are not at the expense of working families

UNION TEEN

Seattle students took part in a unique union-backed summer program that boosted their work skills and showed them what unions are all about



4 CURRENTS

A fight for justice at LAX airport, union families spin the Wheel of Fortune and other union news



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Unions must mobilize for Nov. 3

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Fire Fighters give a gift from the heart, a high-flying tribute to a late unionist and more

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The corporate agenda

23 HOMEPAGE

Take a look at the gender gap in your paycheck on the new AFL-C!O Equal Pay website and check out recent AFL-CIO publications

NORTHWEST PILOTS

fter the longest strike against a major air carrier in a decade, the Air Line Pilots Association ratified a new four-year contract with Northwest Airlines that boosts pay by 12 percent. The pact, settled after two years' negotiations and a two-week walk-out, also includes a profit-sharing plan and \$56 million in cash and stock options as retroactive pay for the past two years.

Five years ago, Air Line Pilots at Northwest gave up \$365 million in concessions to keep the company out of bankruptcy. When Northwest became profitable again, the company refused to address the concessions at the bargaining table. After two years' negotiations, some 6,000 pilots struck the Minnesota-based company on



Aug. 29 and returned to work after ALPA's Master Executive Council approved the

tentative contract Sept. 12.

Union members also won a significant victory when the company agreed to phase out its two-tier wage scale.

Stand Up for

teel producers in Japan, Asia and Russia, faced with growing economic crises, have flooded the United States with cut-throat priced steel. To combat dumping of foreign steel, the Steelworkers and leading domestic steel producers have launched a "Stand Up For Steel" campaign.

The campaign, to run through Election Day, is designed to make the public aware of the problem and to spur the government to "safeguard the American steel industry, its employees and their communities," says USWA President George Becker.

The coalition charges that foreign manufacturers are sending their products to this country priced below their own costs and below the prices they charge in their home markets—a practice that is both unfair and illegal under U.S. laws and international codes, the group says.

U-N-I-()-N W-E-E-K

ifteen union families took a starring role on nationwide L television over Labor Day week, competing for cash and union-made prizes on the second annual "Wheel of Fortune" Salute to America's Working Families.

With AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson and hosts Pat Sajak and Vanna White on the set of the popular game show, union members from

around the country jousted for union-made-in-the-USA goodsincluding a Chevrolet Corvette, a Mercury Mountaineer and a Dodge Ram Quad Cab secured by the UAW; a cruise for two on a Mississippi steamboat, courtesy of the Seafarers; and a \$5,000 shopping spree from the Food and Commercial Workers.

First place prize went to Anthony Pilewski of Pittsburgh, a

member of Transport Workers Union Local 85, and his sister Janet Pilewski Bretti, who walked away with a 10-person, fiveroom, week-long family reunion at the Sheraton Waikiki, complete with air travel on Northwest Airlines and a \$30,000 Union Plus line of credit—thanks to the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, the Machinists and the AFL-CIO's Union Privilege.

"Our main purpose was to showcase our product and our union and our workers, who are great, intelligent people," says L. Dale Lamb, assistant secretary at the Flint Glass Workers, which donated a 32-piece stemware set. "It's a way to show that companies and unions can work together and communicate."

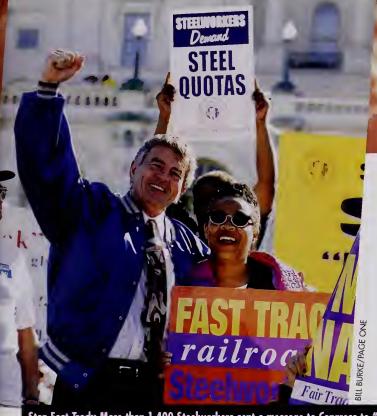
Show Time: AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Union Label President Charles Mercer (right) and

Chavez-Thompson on the "Wheel of Fortune" stage with Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Kivikko.

Merger Plans

he Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers approved a proposed merger with the Grain Millers at its recent convention. Details will be worked out in time for the Grain Millers convention this month. The BCT convention also reelected Frank Hurt as president and elected David B. Durkee as secretary-treasurer and Joseph Thibodeau as executive vice president.

· The executive boards of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers and the Paperworkers approved a merger between the two unions. If ratified in Ianuary at the unions' conventions, the new union will be called PACE, the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy International Union.



Stop Fost Trock: More than 1,400 Steelworkers sent a message to Congress to "Stop Fast Trock," when 30 busloads of union members from 12 states come to Washington, D.C., Sept. 24 to stop the congressional leodership's promised vote for "Fost Track" authority to expand the nation's free trade policies. The USWA's Rapid Response Network of local activists mailed 155,000 handwritten letters to their congressional representatives opposing Fost Trock. "Approval of Fost Trock will expand the failed policies of NAFTA and force all workers into o roce to the bottom,"says USWA President George Becker.

The March to CONQUER CANCER

he union movement's job to improve the lives of working families also means that "fighting diseases should be equal with our struggle for good wages and benefits," says Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. CLUW co-sponsored the March to Conquer Cancer, Sept. 26 at the U.S. Capitol.

"It is extremely important for unions to be involved in the health issues affecting their members, in addition to matters of health coverage," says Johnson, who is a breast cancer survivor.

A candlelight vigil at the Lincoln Memorial preceded the march, and activists all over the country held their own vigils and rallies at state capitals. Meeting in Philadelphia, the CLUW executive board held a mini-conference on women's health the same day as the march. Local activists in San Diego displayed a childhood cancer awareness quilt, while New York City unionists held educational events in area schools.

One in two men and one in

three women risk developing cancer in their lives. For more details on the march, access its website at www. themarch.org.



WORKERS

SPOTLIGHT

TWO UNIONS. ONE BATTLE FOR JUSTICE

Detroit Newspaper **Workers Win Another Round**

he locked-out workers at Detroit's daily newspapers are taking heart from a unanimous ruling by the National Labor Relations Board that ordered former newspaper employees to be rehired immediately, saying their 19-month strike resulted from unfair labor practices by the News and Free Press. The two newspapers plan to appeal the decision. If the workers' case is upheld in federal court, employees would be due back pay from Feb. 14, 1997, when they made an unconditional offer to return to work.

hile most of the nearly 18,000 workers at Los Angeles' massive international airport (LAX) are union members, about 3,500 service employees still labor without union contracts. Recently, two unions have teamed up to help the workers fight for a living wage, affordable health insurance, job security and passenger safety. Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 814 and Service Employees Local 1877 are each organizing separate groups of workers while cooperating on political strategies, research and media outreach.

Workers who don't have a union contract at the airport earn, on average, \$12,000 a year. They include security personnel, wheelchair attendants, skycaps and baggage handlers, and a unit of cooks, bartenders, cashiers and utility workers. The low wages and inadequate training lead to high turnover, which can result in potential security lapses at the airport.

HERE Local 814 and SEIU Local 1877 have joined forces before. The two unions worked together in last year's victorious effort to pass the city's living wage ordinance, which requires employers that contract with the city to pay \$7.39 an hour with family health benefits or \$8.64 without. Now, the unions and their

Respect: Eric Johnson, who works for Argenbright Security, Inc. at LAX oirport, rollies in support of joining SEIU Local 1877, which is coordinating campoign strategies with HERE Local 814.

community allies are urging the city council to expand the living wage law to include employees hired by companies that subcontract with airlines.

"The living wage message really resonates with the workers," says Blanca Gallegos, an SEIU organizer. "They see the janitors making \$7 an hour, while screeners are getting minimum wage [\$5.15 an hour]," she says. "From the living wage, we can move on to discussing other improvements a contract would bring.'

Yet, Gallegos notes, even a living wage can only go so far. "Union contracts are workers' only guarantee, legally binding employers to wages, benefits and job protections."

The LAX campaign is one of a handful of organizing campaigns built on the energy of more than one union. In New Orleans, for instance, HERE, Opcrating Engineers and SEIU have joined forces to organize hospitality industry workers.

Currents

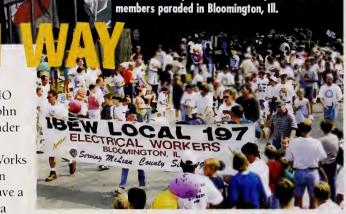
Celebrating Labor Day

THE UNION

t picnics, parades and concerts, union members and their families marked Labor Day 1998 with calls for economic justice and celebrations of organizing victories—such as the Machinists recent win among 19,000 new members at United Airlines. Workers in Seattle joined in picnic festivities with Vice President Al Gore

and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney under the banner "America Works Better When Workers Have a Voice." "At a

time when corporate profits and executive salaries are soaring, our



Celebrating labor: Vice President Al Gore joined

Seattle festivities; AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka led Milwaukee's Labor Day parade astride a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, while union

> unions give us a voice in the workplace, in the economy and in the decisions that affect our jobs, our livelihood and our families' future," Sweeney told the crowd.

About 2,000 workers and their families in Kansas City, Mo., hosted AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka at the city's first-ever Labor Day picnic. Trumka toured the GST Steel Mill, where workers recently went on strike and won better pay and pension benefits.

In Minnesota, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson announced a program to make home ownership more affordable for union members and municipal workers through the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust.

Unions celebrated the traditional workers' holiday in many other ways, including a "labor history theater" with folk musician Billy Bragg and actors portraying Mother Jones and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for the estimated 100,000 marchers in Detroit's annual Michigan State AFL-CIO Labor Day parade. Postal Workers Local 888 in Springfield, Mo., and the Central Ozarks Labor Council sponsored a 5K run, with proceeds donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association. And for the third straight year, Harlon Joye, vice president of the Atlanta Labor Council, hosted a 13-hour radio special on workers' issues.

inding up a year of town hall discussions, meetings and hearings as part of an unprecedented national dialogue on race, the President's Initiative on Race issued its final report in September. "America in the 21st Century: Forging a New America" stresses the need to raise the minimum wage and support collective bargaining to eliminate poverty and narrow the

income gap between racial

groups.

The advisory board, which includes AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, the only labor and Latina member, calls the report a "good first step" in the nation's struggle to end racial discrimination and eradicate poverty. Chavez-Thompson says the key to economic parity is for more people to be able to join unions. Because union members earn higher wages than nonunion workers, minority union members are better able to support their families, provide better education, gain better health care and become stronger forces in their communities.

The report cites the advantages of belonging to unions, saying unions protect job security, reduce wage disparities and provide necessary benefits to working people. "It is important that there be increased recognition of the benefits of collective bargaining and the role of unions in ensuring employment equity," the report states. The panel also encouraged the labor movement to continue its outreach to minority and immigrant workers.

ORGANIZING

AFSCME About 120 workersat DuPage County Probation and Court Services voted for AFSCME Council 31 representation on Aug. 26 over the objections of their boss—Chief Judge Michael Glasso of Illinois' 18th Judicial Circuit.

Milwaukee manufacturing plant voted 117-67 for Teamsters representation in late August. At Trinity Waste Services in Fort Worth, Texas, employees voted by a two-to-one margin to join Teamsters Local 767. Perseverance paid off for the 220 drivers and helpers who overcame employer threats and intimidation during their fourth organizing attempt.

ILWU The 281 workers at the Aston Wailea Resort in Wailuka, Hawaii, said "aloha" to their new union after a June election victory. Longshore and Warehouse union members from nearby hotels and resorts helped Aston Wailea workers beat back management's anti-union campaign.

staffers at CPC Health/Chestnut Lodge in Rockville, Md., voted to join SEIU District 1199E-DC and United Salaried Physicians and Dentists on Sept. 2. A unit of 110 workers at the Lock-Towns Community Mental Health Center in Miami, Fla., voted for SEIU Local 1991 in late August.

USWA Three units of Minnesota health care workers voted for Steelworkers representation Aug. 19. The 206 clinic and nursing home workers are in two units at the Duluth Clinic in Hibbing and another at the Woodland Good Samaritan Nursing Home in Brainerd. The wins are part of the union's Minnesota Health Care Organizing Project in the northern part of the state. Also in August, workers at Pioneer Metals in Minneapolis voted 105-13 for USWA representation.

WORKING SMART AND SAFE IN THE BUILDING TRADES

Building Trades members can receive 10 hours of training in the Smart Mark Standardized Safety and Health Training Program to recognize hazards and avoid accidents in the workplace. The program, which expands OSHA-approved training, was developed by the 15 unions in the Construction Industry Partnership and seven management associations.

The unionized construction industry invests more than \$500 million a year on training programs. The building trades unions train more than 180,000 apprentices a year in more than 2,000 appren-

ticeship and training schools across the country.

The goal of the training is to create safer, more productive workplaces and to increase union building trades employment with a pool of highly trained workers. Among the unions involved in the program: Asbestos Workers, Boilermakers, Bricklayers, Carpenters, IBEW, Elevator Constructors, Bridge Workers, Laborers, Operating Engineers, Cement Masons, Painters, Roofers, Sheet Metal Workers, Teamsters and Plumbers.

Disconnecting Two-Tier Wages

fter a four-week strike, some 6,300 workers at Southern New England Telephone ratified a 30-month contract Sept. 17 that addressed SNET's two-tier wage system—an issue that was also a key factor in the recent Northwest and US West strikes.

Members of the Connecticut Union of Telephone Workers, an affiliate of CWA, will receive an 11 percent raise over term. The

contract eliminates the two-tier wage system in which new hires receive less pay and workers hired after 1995 pay the full cost of their health benefits. Some workers whose wages are below industry standards will receive larger raises, including installation and repair technicians who, with a 67 percent raise over the life of the contract, will see the biggest increase.

EMPOWERING LATINO WORKERS

he Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) celebrated its 25th anniversary by charting a program to empower the nation's 30 million Latino workers through the ballot box and union membership.

More than 700 delegates met in San Juan, Puerto Rico, August 19–23 under the banner "Latino Empowerment: Abriendo Puertas al Futuro" (Opening Doors to the Future).

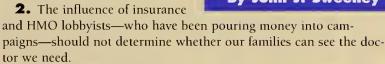
Organizing is the key to economic and political power, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson told the convention. "Organizing is not a luxury. It isn't something we do in our spare time. It is the most important thing we do," said Chavez-Thompson, the first person of color to serve as a top Federation officer.

The delegates also re-elected UAW international representative Henry Gonzalez as president and Damaso Seda, TWU special assistant to the president, as executive vice president.

OUT FRONT

n off-year elections, voter turnout is low. Except among rich folks and others propelled to the polls by deep self-interests. They'd love to see working families sit out this election. But we have too much at stake to stay home Nov. 3. Here are 10 reasons we each have to do everything we can to get our members and their families to the polls:

1. The leaders we elect in November will decide whether we scrap Social Security's retirement, disability and survivors protections in favor of high-risk private investment accounts that would cut benefits, increase the retirement age and favor Wall Street over Main Street.



3. Our children deserve better than crumbling school buildings and overcrowded classrooms. Our education investments should benefit all children, not send a handful of kids to private schools.

4. No one who works should be left unable to feed, clothe and shelter his or her children. Today's minimum wage does not keep even a small family out of poverty, but the representatives we vote for can change that and make work pay.

5. Unequal pay will cost the average 25-year-old working woman \$523,000 over her worklife. The right national and state leaders can bring her stronger equal pay laws and better enforcement of laws already on the books.

6. While CEOs saw their pay jump 499 percent from 1980 to 1995, working families got a puny 9 percent raise—not even enough to keep pace with inflation. Our votes can make the economy work better for working families.

7. The wealthiest Americans do not need another tax cut. But they're likely to get one if we don't make our voices heard at the polls.

8. America's workers don't need more part-time, temporary, nonstandard, benefit-free jobs, and they certainly don't need to see more jobs sent to other countries. The more power we exercise at the voting booth, the more say we'll have when Congress considers trade deals and attacks on workers' wages, working conditions and job security.

9. Employers break the law every day to prevent workers from joining together in unions to improve our lives. Working families need elected leaders at every level who will support our right to organize, and we need to elect legislators who will work for labor laws that work for working families.

10. Each year more than 6,000 workers die from injuries on the job, 50,000 die from occupational diseases and 6 million are injured at work. We have a chance to elect candidates who agree that no one should have to die for a job.

And finally, we have to get our members and their families out to vote because it is time for dignity and respect for working families. Not just on the job, but throughout our society. Maybe we can't outspend the big-rollers to buy respect from elected officials. But we can out-vote our opponents. That's power. And with it comes respect.



Why We Can't

One Out

By John J. Sweeney

October 1998 7

first we mobilized members then we registered them Voter Turnout Will Decide November **Elections**

n Labor Day, Illinois AFL-CIO President Don Johnson mapped out what union members and their families must do before Nov. 3 if they want to see worker-friendly candidates sworn into office. He could have been

sworn into office. He could have been speaking to workers nationwide.

"Each of us has a responsibility to talk

with our co-workers to make sure they are registered to vote in the upcoming election.

"Each of us has the responsibility to be

"Each of us has the responsibility to be sure they are given the information to help them make intelligent decisions.

"Each of us has the responsibility not only to vote on Nov. 3, but to make certain that our friends and neighbors go to the polls and vote in the interest of their paycheck, health care and families."

But if each of us shrugs off Election Day, then the folks who'll be holding the victory parties on election night are the same people who want to keep insurance companies and HMOs in charge of health care, turn Social Security over to Wall Street and deny lowwage workers a living wage and all workers the right to organize.

Unions are educating and mobilizing members about the issues, registering voters, getting them to the polls, making one-on-one contact with workers—and in some cases, running for office—to make America work better for working families.

Past success points to member mobilization

With the help of Labor '96—the union movement's revitalized political mobilization—and a presidential race to attract more voters, union households boosted their turnout from about 10 million voters in 1994 to more than 22 million in 1996. As a result, union families represented 23 percent of all votes cast in 1996, versus just 14 percent in 1994.

A 9 percentage point increase in turnout can make a big difference. In 1994, Newt Gingrich and his extremist cronies came to Washington, D.C., with a 22-seat majority and a "Contract on America" calling for cuts in Medicare and education, a national right-to-work law and decimation of workplace safety laws—all to pay for tax cuts for the rich. In 1996, that voting margin was cut in half. In 1997, one of big business's touch-

ITS JIME TO

BY MIKE HALL

stone issues, Fast Track, was defeated.

"We've made real alliances with the community...by reaching into the community," says Fabian Nuñez, political director of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. After Election Day, the progressive coalition of racial, social justice, human and civil rights and religious groups that came together to fight Proposition 226 and work on Labor '98 will continue working together on issues such as health care, the minimum wage and education. "We want to keep walking side by side," Nuñez says.

When Proposition 226, the effort to silence the voice of working families through so-called "paycheck protection" legislation emerged in California this spring, unionists mobilized for action. Visiting more than 18,000 worksites and 5,005 precincts, and phoning more than 600,000 union members and their families, union activists scored a stunning turnaround: Proposition 226, which once held a 70-30 edge—was defeated on June 2 by a 54 to 46 percent margin. Overall, more than 20,000 new activists were tapped for political action—and are ready to roll for Labor '98.

"All the polls say it's going to be a record low turnout," Nuñez says. "That's why we want to make sure we increase our union member base. That could be the determining factor."

Not only do big business and its allies have the cash, their traditional voting block is expected to outnumber working families on November 3 because the higher the income level, the likelier people are to vote.

A low turnout is exactly what backers of the corporate agenda are counting on.

"Pollsters expect only 1 in 3 of those eligible will vote—a record low," Business Week reported on June 29. "That is a boon for Republicans."

Nuñez says hundreds of union members have volunteered to hit the streets and knock on doors, not only on weekends, but every day for three weeks leading up to elections. He also points to a special emphasis to turn out African American and Latino union members.

One month from now, working families can determine who holds the edge in Congress and who wins 36 governors' races and dozens of state legislative elections—and which ballot measures become law.

Beating the big bucks

Since the 1996 elections, anti-worker interests have complained loudly and bitterly about labor's increased political influence. In reality,

corporations outspent unions by 11to-1 in 1996, and are expected to maintain or top that advantage this year. COURTESY DIANE ROSENBAUM

A look at member



On the ballot: Diana Rosenbaum, a 25-year CWA Local 7901 mem ber and first-time candidate, won the primaries out of a field of six candidates running for Oregon House of Representatives.

mobilization efforts around the country, and unions' emphasis on issues, pro-worker candidates, voter registration and GOTV efforts, shows that despite an embattled White House, there just might be some pro-worker surprises on Election Day.

In last spring's Oregon primary, Diana Rosenbaum, a 25-year CWA Local 7901 member and first-time political candidate, won the election with 43 percent of the vote in a field of six candidates running for the Oregon House of Representatives.

Rosenbaum, a Portland US West customer service representative, says she didn't win based on the amount of money she spent—two other candidates outspent her—but "because we mounted such a huge grassroots campaign." With the backing of the Oregon AFL-CIO and the Northwest Labor Council, Rosenbaum says, "we had a lot of union volunteers who were working on their first campaign."

This fall, working families have a chance to regain control of the Oregon House and send Rosenbaum to Salem—where workers' compensation and a raise in the minium wage have been under attack. "But," she adds, "it's not enough to just be fighting to hold on to what we gained 20 years ago...we must be proactive too, start framing the debate."

Unionists on the ballot

Rosenbaum is among 600 unionists running for office this election year. Making the concerns of working families heard requires changing the makeup of local, state and national government—and one

of the best ways to do that is for union members to run for office. Along with state federations and central labor councils, the AFL-CIO and its affiliates are working toward the goal of 2,000 union working women and men, with union support and training, on the ballot at the turn of the century. With 600 running for office this year—the Federation's goal for 1998 elections—the foundation for "2000 in 2000" is already in place.



Hamilton is a "100 percenter" on union issues.

COURTESY ART HAMILTON

This election year, Rosenbaum is joined by 30-year IBEW member Art Hamilton in his race for Arizona Secretary of State. Now a state representative, Hamilton is "a 100-percenter on the issues," says Chuck Huggins, Arizona AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer. "You name it, Art has been there."

Huggins says the state federation is taking advantage of new communications technology, the telephone auto-dialer, to reach working families, recruit volunteers and turn out the vote for Hamilton and other working family candidates. The auto-dialer enables each state federation to tailor a message for each local union. The local provides the names and phone numbers of registered voters and a local officer records a brief message.

After the message from the candidate, Huggins says, people have the chance to volunteer or contribute to the campaign by simply push-

> ing a number. Arizona unions also mailed voter registration packets to all their unregistered members, and before the Oct. 5 registration deadline, the autodialer was used to follow up. The message asked members to press "one" if they had regis-



Voting Records Online

Where do your U.S. senators and representatives stand on working family issues? Find out fast with the new AFL-CIO 1996 and 1997 electronic voting record now online at www.aflcio.org/vrecord.

You can access the information by looking up an individual member of Congress, a state delegation or a specific piece of legislation. Topics covered include Fast Track, fair wages, education, health care workplace safety and workers' rights. The website also allows you to download and print complete files—to distribute to union members, at community events and during precinct walks.





tered—if they hadn't, they were reminded of the registration deadline.

Getting members to the polls

Halfway across the country in Cleveland, Meryl Johnson, community relations director for the Cleveland Teachers Union Local 279, has been setting up a Teachers Union voter registration table at neighborhood fairs, parents' conferences and at the city's big Labor Day celebration.

"We can register lots of people," Johnson explains, "but when it comes time to vote, if they stay home, what good does it do?"

That's why Johnson is keeping track of all the newly registered voters. Prior to Election Day, she will send each voter a personal note with precinct location and the telephone number for the Board of Elections.

Twenty-one local unions attended the Cleveland AFL-CIO's Labor '98 kick-off meeting in August. "We are far ahead in terms of preparation compared to where we were on the 'Issue Two' campaign," Executive-Secretary John Ryan says, referring to the unions' successful 1997 campaign that defeated an attempt to gut the state's workers compensation program.

This summer and fall, local unions in Cleveland distributed thousands of membership surveys to find out what issues working families want to see at the top of a Working Families Agenda. Cleveland residents rated health care, Social Security, fair wages and the right to organize as top issues—as have working families nationwide.

Unions are reaching out to their members, asking for their help—and it's working. Patrick Green, political director of the SEIU Ohio State Council, says the council has trained 20 rank-

and-file members in "the uts and bolts of the ssues, how to recruit and ollow up with volunteers nd how to run phone anks.

"They are full time in ne field, from Labor Day VOTE: Charleston (S.C.) Labor Council President Thomas Crenshaw and AFGE Local 1869 member Sharon Richardson register voters at a local shopping mall.

to Election Day, working with locals, labor councils and Labor '98 people," he says.

Holding issues and candidates forums is another key strategy for membership mobilization. In North Carolina, Rep. Eva Clayton (D), who

sports a 100 percent labor voting record since taking office in 1992, was greeted by about 60 union members who attended a union hall meeting where they heard from and questioned Clayton. Two rank-and-file members from UNITE locals 1948 and 2648 in Greensboro are working full time on member education, get-out-the-vote and worksite visits, says Stephen Sommers, the locals' business agent.

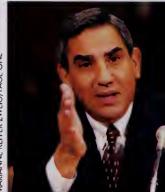
New York unions are focusing on registering union members too, says Amy Ritchie, New York State AFL-CIO assistant political director. Along with providing each New York union with a list of its members who are not registered to vote, distributing more than 75,000 registration forms and providing materials for union publications, the unions are building on traditional "Labor Neighbor" program strategies to sign up working families. Volunteers are provided precinct walk lists of unregistered union members and registration materials. "They are going to all the unregistered voters. We've found it has put a face on the message and that's pretty successful," Ritchie says.

In Charleston, S.C., Tommy Crenshaw, president of the Greater Charleston (S.C.) Labor Council, says that the council's voter registration drive first set up shop on a busy Saturday at Charleston's largest shopping mall in July—and continued at various locations until the Oct. 3 deadline. Now, the CLC is focusing on get-out-the-vote efforts. "We're a small Union Cities central labor council, but we do our part to spread the word and let our voices be



heard," Crenshaw says.

The winning formula for working families on Nov. 3-member-tomember issue education and communication, voter registration, member mobilization and get-out-the vote effortsslashed the antiworker lawmakers' power in 1996, and was fine-tuned in California with Proposition 226's



Multi-trade: Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert Georgine and BCT leaders seek to empower members through grassroots action in 11 districts.

defeat in June. The next challenge is getting members to the polls in November.

Building Trades Aim for the Grassroots

Building and Construction Trades unions are launching a multi-level, multi-trade program that aims to register all building trades members and to ensure they all vote on Election Day. The program seeks to mobilize members in each of 11 targeted districts through an educational process that delivers the union message through media, mail, literature and phone banks.

"The bipartisan program will be guided by a spirit of cooperation involving all affiliated building trades unions," says Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert Georgine. "It encompasses several levels of coordinated support, including comprehensive, locally based activities orchestrated by a campaign coordinator in each of the selected congressional districts."

Volunteers will be recruited to help spread our message, educate and mobilize members and conduct massive voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives in each of the targeted districts.

Women Voters Back Working Families Agenda

Surveys and polls show that working women, union and nonunion, share the same concerns when it comes to working family issues—equal pay, retirement security, education, child care and health care. That's why the AFL-CIO's Working Women's Department and the Coalition of Labor Union Women will hold more than 1,000 events before Election Day to provide them with the information about the issues and make sure they get to the polls.

CLUW President Gloria Johnson says CLUW's 78 chapters, plus those of the Federation's other constituency groups, make them "a great vehicle for getting our message out that we ought to be concerned about health care, pay equity, child care and Social Security—and how important it is to vote."

Mobilizing women voters is critical. In 1996, women backed candidates who supported working family issues at a rate 17 percentage points higher then men—and through member mobilization, voter registration and get-out-the-vote effort, can do so again.

SOCIAL FIN **Strengthening Social Security** is at the top of union members' priorities for congressional and presidential action. polls say. Two-thirds of the elderly rely on it for more than half of their Wall Street money managers and anti-government ideologues are exploiting working families' retirement income. But those same polls show

he following articles examine how working families rely on Social Security as the foundation of retirement income and as their principal insurance against family impoverishment due to death or disability; what Wall Street and corporate interests stand to gain from privatizing the nation's most successful social program; and how union members can ensure that changes made to keep Social Security sound for future generations do not come at the expense of working families.

that many people aren't

sure Social Security will be

there for them.



concerns about Social Security to foster an

unfounded sense of crisis—and to peddle

privatized individual accounts as the solutions



PART 1 Social Security for Working Families

What is Social Security?

ocial Security is a comprehensive social insurance program that protects workers and our families against the loss of earnings that occurs when a worker retires, dies or becomes disabled. It is a form of social insurance, which means that Americans work together to protect each of us individually. Last year, Social Security paid out more than \$362 billion in benefits. Forty-three million Americans rely on its monthly cash benefits.

Before Social Security, people usually worked as long as they could, because pensions and savings were inadequate. Those too old to work, disabled workers and the children and spouses of workers who died or became disabled had few protections beyond their family resources, their congregation, the orphanage or

the poor house. The rampant unemployment and low incomes of the Great Depression and the concerted efforts of America's trade union movement helped propel the creation of the Social Security insurance system that has been paying benefits without fail since 1937.

Social Security's focus on concern with economic security is reflected in three benefit cornerstones: retirement, disability and survivors.

• Retirement benefits: As *the* retirement plan for American workers and their families, Social Security is the largest source of income for older Americans. Without it, more than half of Americans aged 65 and older would live in poverty, instead of the current 11 percent. In a nation where only one-third of the elderly receive private pensions, two-thirds rely on Social Security for half or more of their retire-

"Privatization is just another ploy to hurt working people just as privatizing state



privatizing state government jobs is."

—Bill Price, President, Chemical Workers Council/UFCW, Local 436C, Wallingford, Conn.

ment income—and 30 percent rely on it almost entirely.

- Disability benefits: Nearly three in 10 workers will become severely disabled in their lives. Social Security replaces up to two-thirds of average wage workers' earnings and protects their families—even if their injury is sustained while they are quite young. Today, the program is providing monthly benefits to 6 million disabled workers and their dependents
- Survivors benefits: With one out of five workers dying before reaching retirement age, Social Security delivers vitally needed income to survivors. If an average-wage worker dies at 25, leaving a spouse and two small children, Social Security may replace more than four-

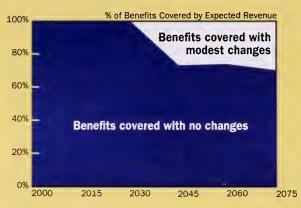
fifths of his or her income. More than 7 million people receive survivors benefits.

Social Security benefits include unique income safeguards. Benefits are protected against inflation because they rise to respond to increases in the cost of living—a feature pensions and savings rarely have. Social Security retirement benefits are guaranteed, and last for a lifetime. And the system's progressive benefit formula means that workers with low lifetime earnings get a larger percentage of their earnings replaced.

Social Security provides a comprehensive package of benefits that no private insurer would, or could, offer. Imagine trying to purchase life and disability insurance that provides protection for a lifetime, guarantees retirement income that

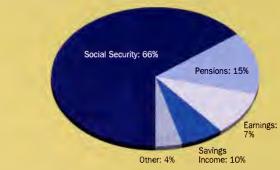
continues through life, adjusts to cover increases in the cost of living and can't be reduced, even if the stock market drops or bad investments are made or an insurance company goes out of business. Even if its many pieces could be assembled in the private investment markets, the cost would be staggering, far beyond what the vast majority of American families could afford. Guaranteed benefits are impossible with any private plan that is subject

Social Security is Not Disappearing



SOURCES: Calculated from 1998 Annual Report of the OASDI Trustees.

Social Security Provides Most of the Income for Typical Older Americans



* Numbers do not add up to 100% because of rounding. This chart is for the middle fifth of the income distribution. Older Americans include married couples with at least one person age 65 or older and nonmarried persons age 65 and older.

Sources: Social Security Administration, Office of Research, Evaluation and Statistics, *Income of the Population 55 or Older, 1996*, April 1998.

HOWARD SCOTT, USWA

"One of my union brothers lost his job because of an injury at a young age....He actually cried when he found out that Social Security would help him, and his children would be able to continue their education. The only people who would benefit by privatizing Social Security are on Wall Street."

—John Rebrovich, president, Steelworkers Local 2705, Hibbing, Minn.

SOCIAL SECURITY for Working Families

"The political will does exist to make the program sound for years to come."

—Rita Knott, Flight Attendants (retiring next year), Arlington, Va.

to the business cycle and the whims of the financial markets.

The system is multi-generational, because its benefits protect children, spouses, disabled workers and retirees. It draws us together as a society, because every covered worker chips in so that the income of every working family can be preserved. It draws on the contributions of each of us to protect the future of all of us.

Every Working Family Benefits from Social Security

Union members know that union membership means we're more likely to have better pensions than our nonunion counterparts. But most pension plans take Social Security as a starting point and are intended to supplement, rather than replace, Social Security benefits. Maintaining a standard of living during retirement generally requires a combination of

Social Security, pension benefits and personal sav-

ings. Further, many employers in recent years have pushed to abolish or cut back defined-benefit pension plans, which pay guaranteed benefits for life, and replace them with defined-contribution plans like 401(k)s, which lack such a guarantee.

For women, Social Security is especially important. Women continue to earn less than men—an average of 74 cents on the dollar—during their working lives, are more likely to be in temporary or part-time jobs and are more likely to interrupt their careers to care for children and elderly parents. As a result, they have smaller savings and pensions when they retire. In 1996, half of all older women received a private pension of less than \$3,679 per year, compared with \$6,442 per year for older men.



For More Information:

The Century Foundation
TCF maintains a directory of experts and speakers on Social Security and also has a website dedicated to the topic at: www://www.socsec.org.

Institute for America's Future America's Future organized a coalition of groups concerned about Social Security and maintains a directory of speakers on the issue at: www.ourfuture.org.

National Council of Senior Citizens www.ncscinc.org/issues/ss.htm.

As a group, women also live longer than men, which means they need protection longer as well. While private savings and many retirement plans can run out of money, Social Security benefits are paid throughout a retiree's lifetime. And the system's progressive benefit formula guarantees that the amount of earnings replaced at retirement is higher for lowwage workers, a group that disproportionately includes many women.

People of color also make up a lopsided portion of the low-wage group, and are less likely to be covered by pensions or have savings income. African Americans in particular are more likely to need the survivors and disability benefits that only Social Security comprehensively offers.

Young workers may be less likely than older workers to feel a commitment to Social Security. Yet a 20-year-old worker has 3-in-10 chance of becoming disabled and unable to work for some period before retirement—and a 1-in-5 chance of dying before retirement age. Alternative schemes being proposed do not ensure disability or survivors benefits. In addition, with the parents of young workers receiving Social Security, they are less likely to be a financial burden after retirement—no small benefit for families just starting out.

The fact is, Social Security benefits everyone in this country: workers, our families, friends and neighbors. Without it, millions of workers would be forced to spend their later years in poverty, and far more people would be impoverished after the death of a working spouse or parent.

Yet, as the next article shows, corporate interests are spending big money on contributions to lawmakers and funding for antiworker think tanks urging Congress to scrap these protections in favor of high-risk private investment accounts that would require benefit cuts, force an increase in the retirement age and benefit Wall Street far more than Main Street.

—David Kameras

Grassroots Action

What You Can Do

There's a lot at stake for every working American in what ultimately happens to Social Security—and a lot you can do to make sure fixing Social Security doesn't come at the expense of working families.

Training

Join in the National Strategy/Training session Nov. 13–14 in Washington, D.C., or host a training session at your union convention, worksites and union halls.

Form local speakers' bureaus, hold teach-ins and forums in conjunction with our allies and targeted to specific groups and regions, including women, people of color and young people.

Media outreach

Send for the Social Security Action Kit that provides the tools for writing sample articles, op-eds and letters to the editor.

Reprint these America@work Social Security articles in union publications. Use cameraready Social Security materials in latest International Labor Communications Association packet.

Political action

Talk to friends and neighbors and urge them to vote for candidates who will support strengthening Social Security.

Urge candidates to pledge to Strengthen Social Security for Working Families (call for a sample pledge).

Hold accountability sessions with elected leaders.

Visit and send letters and postcards to members of Congress.

Meet with new members of Congress in November.

Join the campaign to Strengthen Social Security for Working Families. For campaign materials or more information, call 1-877-760-2340. Or call the AFL-CIO at 202-637-5027. □

PARI 2 Privatization Profiteers

nti-government ideologues and Wall Street money managers seeking to dismantle the Social Security system say Social Security is about to run out of money. What they're not saying is that for the next 33 years, Social Security can meet all of its obligations to provide benefits for retirees, survivors, people who become disabled and the families who rely on them. Until 2032, Social Security can provide 100 percent of benefits. After that, the system can pay out 70 percent of benefits even if we don't do anything to change it. Social Security won't "go broke."

Some of these privatization schemes would completely eliminate Social Security and require individuals to transfer what they now pay in Social Security payroll taxes to individual accounts. Other plans are based on partial privatization, usually rerouting to individual accounts a portion of the Social Security payroll tax.

Behind the campaign to privatize Social Security are most of the same corporate think-tanks and right-wing ideologues that funded "paycheck protection" legislation to silence union members' voice in politics, and that back efforts to derail health care legislation for working families.

These groups are working with companies that would make millions of dollars in administrative fees if Social Security were privatized. In addition to these huge but hidden administrative costs, which could take as much as 20 percent from an individual's retirement investment, there's something else these groups aren't saying: Privatizing Social Security would require raising the retirement age and slashing

"I'm really worried about all this talk about privatization.... People are looking at government institutions as not capable to do the job, and I think that's baloney."

—Rudi Faltus (center), United Educators of San Francisco/AFT/NEA

benefits to make the system work.

Here's who's behind the privatization push: The Cato Institute. As the most high-profile backer of privatizing Social Security, Cato is pushing its donors to contribute to a \$100 million ad campaign boosting privatization, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. According to an investigation by *The Nation* magazine, 25 percent of Cato funding comes from Wall Street firms. Other funds come from corporations and banks.

"We're receiving support from the financial community, from the investment community, from the insurance community," for the Social Security campaign, Cato's director of health and welfare studies Michael Tanner told the *American Prospect* magazine in 1996. "We're receiving support from large employers concerned about payroll tax increases."

Jose Pinera, the architect of Chile's privatized social insurance scheme, now advises the Cato Institute, according to the organization's website (www.cato.org). A United Nations report says that 40 percent of workers in Chile's privatized pension system will need additional

says that 40 percent of workers in Chile's privatized pension system will need additional

"There's nothing like U.S. Social Security in Mexico. The main reason we came to this country is to work in a place where an ordinary family can have some kind of financial security. I know that when I get older, I may not be a wealthy man, but I will at least have a minimum pension."

 —Eleno Flores, Las Vegas, Nevada Striker against Kukurin Concrete Co.
 (Bldg. Trades Organizing Project, AFL-CIO)
 Translated from Spanish by David Fishlow (BTOP director of communications).





funds to survive. Not only are Chilean workers' funds invested in a roller-coaster stock market—they will pay out an additional 15 to 20 percent in fees charged by investment companies. Chile's private system is now about three times more costly to the government than the system it replaced.

The Heritage Foundation. Founded by beer magnate Adolph Coors 25 years ago, Heritage advocates replacing much of Social Security in favor of personal accounts. Together with Cato, Heritage plans "to push their donors to contribute to a \$100 million ad campaign" on Social Security privatization, according to the Wall Street Journal. Heritage is regarded as the country's most influential conservative think tank. Starting in 1977, Coors was the target of a 10-year boycott by the AFL-CIO because of its union-busting tactics. Heritage helped write the anti-worker GOP "Contract With America." Today, it also gets financial support from other right-wing foundations, such as the John M. Olin Foundation (see below). Heritage's other top causes include backing school vouchers and tax cuts for the wealthy.

The Concord Coalition. Concord President Peter Peterson, who founded his own private investment banking firm, has called for replacing Social Security with mandatory personal savings accounts as well as raising the retirement age and cutting benefits. Dubbed the "Cadillac Cassandra" by *Barron's* magazine, Peterson has been known to take a helicopter from Manhattan to the Hamptons to avoid the inconvenience of public highways, according to the *New Republic*. The Concord Coalition's "entitlement reform" project gets financial support from the National Association of Manufacturers, according to the *National Journal*.

The National Development Council/Economic Security 2000. Members of this group have traveled the country speaking to civic groups attempting to drum up public support for privatizing Social Security, according to the National Journal and the American Prospect.

The council has received grants from the John

"It's a scandal. They want to steal something that the trade union movement fought for."

-Michael Madden, Machinists Lodge 112, St. Paul, Minn.

M. Olin Foundation, which—according to its website (www.jmof.org)—funds anti-affirmative action, anti-immigration and pro-school voucher groups.

The National Center for Policy Analysis. Funded by J. Patrick Rooney, one of the top backers of California's Proposition 226, the Center has promoted privatizing Social Security for the past 10 years, and endorses socialled right-to-work bills, the TEAM act and school vouchers. "Like all good sales pitches, this one panders to fear and greed," says the group's executive vice president, Jeanette Nordstrom, referring to the Social Security effort in *The Nation*. "It also tries to break the

The Hidden Cost of Privatization

American Express, Citibank, Alex Brown Inc., the insurance giant AIG, IBM and Digital Equipment Corp. all have contributed to The Cato Institute's privatization scheme, according to the National Journal. So has the Securities Industry Association, according to Scripps Howard news service, as well as Chase and Salomon Brothers, according to the American Prospect. American Express, which offers investment services, is prominently promoted on Cato's website.

If at first glance it isn't obvious that these companies are associated with privatization, that's because they don't want to be seen as leading the charge against a popular and effective program—especially since they have so much to gain from derailing it. Administrative fees paid to investment companies and similar firms under a privatized Social Security system could amount to \$240 billion over 12 years, according to an actuary cited by the Washington Post on Jan. 7, 1997.

An earlier Washington Post investigation found that Wall Street officials want to avoid or at least deflect accusations that they are seeking to transform Social Security to line their own purses, according to financial service industry representatives and others involved in the policy discussion. "Wall Street is not pressing all-out because...they don't want to be accused of being greedy," Stanford G. Ross, a former Social Security commissioner and now a partner at a law firm that represents many of Wall Street's biggest players, told the Post (Sept. 20, 1996).

strong tie between the taxes employees pay during their working years and their right to a pension later on."

The Institute for Research on the Economics of Taxation, Citizens for a Sound Economy and Third Millennium. According to the American Prospect, what these three groups have in common is the view that our most successful social insurance program, one that protects virtually all American workers, should be turned into a lottery-like system. Not surprisingly, they generally are funded by the corporations that would make millions if Social Security were turned into a system of private accounts. Backed by special interest funds, CSE ran a series of pro-Proposition 226

The Investment Company Institute. The lobbying arm of the mutual fund industry has made revising Social Security a top legislative priority, according to the *Washington Post*. Wall Street giants such as Fidelity Investments and Merrill Lynch are represented on the group's retirement security task force. "Wall Street is putting its weight behind the movement in Washington to privatize Social Security," says the *Washington Post*. "Representatives of mutual funds, brokerages, life insurance companies and banks are involved in the lobbying effort to have the government let Wall Street manage a slice of Social Security's money...."

William Shipman, principal of State Street Global Advisors in Boston, a money management firm. Shipman co-chairs Cato's advisory board on Social Security privatization and his company has contributed \$20,000 to the Cato project, says the *National Journal*. According to a 1996 *Washington Post* article, an unnamed executive said: "It's easier for State Street than for Fidelity or Merrill Lynch or American Express because it doesn't have an axe to grind on the precise form privatization takes. *They will gain no matter what* because of all the administrative and custodial services they provide to Wall Street." (Emphasis added.)

In a recent article in the *Journal of Investing*, Shipman argues that expenses under a privatized system would be 1 percent—far lower than the 12 to 14 percent for administrative costs for private insurance, as estimated by the American Council of Life Insurance. He also all but admits that privatizing Social Security would leave many citizens who get survivor benefits out in the cold. "In some cases, the market-based approach would not be able to meet the financial burden resulting from an early death," he writes. "Should this happen, remaining benefits could be financed through general revenues." That's



another way of saying taxes.

Referring to privatization of Social Security, an executive at State Street Bank who didn't want to be named says: "This could be huge for us."

Large companies stand to make huge profits from privatizing Social Security, and their right-wing allies are trying to convince American workers that privatization is the only option. As the next article demonstrates, the cost of private accounts could require raising the retirement age, cutting benefits, increasing government borrowing—or a combination of all three.

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—Laureen Lazarovici

October 1998 15

PART 3 Privatizing Social Security: The Cost to Working Families

hen the stock market dropped by more than 500 points in a single day last month, wiping out all of the gains from 1998, it was a stark reminder that playing the market offers no guaranteed security. Yet Wall Street and its allies in Congress are promoting privatization plans that would replace the current Social Security system, in whole or in part, with individual accounts that workers could invest in the stock market. A roll of the dice, and a lifetime's savings could disappear.

Up until the stock market took a nosedive in September, privatization proponents tried to sell working families on individual accounts by pointing to the recent strong stock market performance. What privatizers didn't say is that a move to individual accounts would also likely require raising the retirement age, cutting benefits, increasing government borrowing—or a combination of all three.

Raising the retirement age to 70

The retirement age is already slated to rise gradually from 65 to 67 in 2027. But raising the retirement age any further—some privatization plans would push it to 70 and beyond—would be a heavy burden to working people in poor health or in physically demanding jobs.

Workers in physically difficult and hazardous jobs such as construction, mining, transportation and agriculture would be hit hard by an increase in the retirement age. Laborers and similar workers are exposed to 12 times the risk of occupational injury as are managers and white-collar workers, their bodies often worn

out by the time they reach retirement. Raising the retirement age would confront workers like these with a difficult choice: more years of work that only further deteriorate their health, or sharply reduced benefits, making it all the more likely that poverty is their payback for a lifetime of hard work. In fact, 81 percent of the public strongly opposes raising the retirement age as a way to boost funding for Social Security, according to recent polls by Peter D. Hart Research.

Slashing benefits

Privatization also could require cutting the cost-of-living allowances (COLAs) that retirees depend on to keep pace with rising prices. This would push many long-term retirees, especially widows and widowers, into poverty. Over time, even modest inflation can greatly erode the ability to buy basic necessities such as clothing and food. As people live longer, the COLA becomes even more important. If you live 20 years after retiring and receive no COLA, you will be able to buy 55 percent of what you bought when you first stopped working. Almost 2 million older Americans would be in poverty if COLAs had been abolished 10 years ago. Social Security's inflationadjusted benefits are crucial because employer-provided pensions and savings are rarely adjusted for inflation.

But even if privatization didn't entail the high price of raising the retirement age and benefit cuts, it would still jeopardize retirement income security by replacing lifelong, guaranteed benefits with benefits dependent on workers' luck as investors and the ups and downs of the stock market. On June 19, 1998, The *Wall Street Journal* advised: "Stay out of stock funds if you don't have a lot of money

"I'm looking forward to getting Social Security. I'm glad I'm getting out before they raise the retirement age. I hurt my leg and I have to go up and down a ladder to stock items. I've worked 40 years. I'm tired and looking for a little rest. If they cut it, I don't know what I'd do. Private accounts would

be hitting below the belt. I might be cutting my own throat to do that."

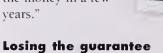
—Eleanor Freer, Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers Local 118, Washington, D.C.

"Saving for any working class person is hard during these times. You're talking about whether to eat or put \$100 into savings. A lot of people are having a hard time making ends meet—that's reality. But the people who make decisions about Social Security are better off than the average worker, so they don't have a good idea what goes on with the average

—Michael McCarthy, bosun, Point Pleasant, N.J., Seafarers.

American."

[or] if you will need the money in a few years."



Under a privatized retirement system, the accounts workers rely on—despite a lifetime of investing—could fluctuate drastically. Since 1956, there have been nine major downturns in the stock market when stock prices tumbled by 20 percent or more for months or even years at a time.

For example, starting in January 1973, stock prices as measured by Standard and Poor's 500 Index fell by 48 percent before they finally bottomed out nearly two years later. The stock market did not reach its January 1973 level again for more than seven years.

What would have happened if Social Security had been replaced by personal accounts in the early 1970s? Assuming the amounts set aside in personal accounts were fully invested in the stock market, two workers with the very same work histories, wages and retirement account contributions could see their nest eggs vary by more than 50 percent—depending on whether they had the good luck to retire in 1970, or the bad luck to retire in 1975. Stock market declines as big as the one in the early 1970s would have a catastrophic impact on retirement income security under a system in which personal accounts replaced Social Security.

Even this large variation in retirement savings assumes everyone in a given year has the same degree of luck or skill in investing the money in his or her personal retirement accounts. In reality, investment returns would vary greatly from person to person and from year to year, depend-



"Privatization would be a bad deal. A lot of people would lose. We'd end up taking care of our parents. There would be a few winners, like the lottery. I think we should find some other way to put money into the system. I may be all right because I have a 401(k), but what about my brother, who's never done that?"

—Justin Olney, 28, OPEIU Local 2, Washington, D.C., and a Union Summer intern in Chicago ing on the choices each individual made. Such a system might produce many winners. But it also would produce a huge increase in the number of retirees who would be forced into poverty.

Privatization would strip away Social Security's protections for families stricken by death



and disability, as well as retirement security. Social Security's guaranteed benefits do not fluctuate with the ups and downs of the stock market. You get a regular monthly check for as long as you live. After that, your surviving spouse and minor children will continue to receive Social Security benefits. Personal retirement accounts invested in the stock market have none of these crucial advantages.

—Laureen Lazarovici

Get out the facts on Social Security by reprinting these articles—as a three-part series or in a special supplement—in your local and national membership publications. Available on disk or camera-ready copy. Call 202-637-5010.

Options for Working Families

We must take steps soon to strengthen Social Security so that all working families can be assured full benefits. Social Security can be there for not only current retirees but younger workers as well—if we insist that it will be there. The decision America must address is whether changes to Social Security will help working families—or Wall Street. With modest adjustments, Social Security can provide future generations the same protections the program has offered for more than six decades.

Social Security pipeline fueled by new workers

Think of Social Security as a pipeline. Workers and employers pay into the fund, which in turn pays retirement, survivors and disability benefits to workers and their families. The payroll taxes that today's workers contribute go to today's retirees and other beneficiaries. Just as it does now, Social Security will continue to collect payroll taxes from workers and employers, and that money will continue to pay benefits. The income going into the system will provide enough money to cover a large part, but not all, of future benefits. After 2032, Social Security will need to pay out more than it takes in.

The critical figure to consider when determining Social Security's future viability is not the number of retirees per worker but the number of dependents, which includes retirees *and* dependents. It is projected that in 2030, there will be about 79 dependents per

100 workers—well below the ratio of 95 dependents to 100 workers in 1965. This means workers will be supporting a lot fewer people in the future than they have in the past. Until the 1980s, Social Security was funded on a "pay-as-you-go" basis. To prepare for Baby Boomer retirements, Congress decided in 1983 to begin building two special funds. By the end of 1997, the surplus in those funds totaled more than \$655 billion. Last year, the Social Security program took in \$88.6 billion more than it paid out. That money is invested in safe U.S. government bonds, which earned \$43.8 billion in interest last year and are considered the safest investment in the world.

Reforming the system

Reforming Social Security can build on this beginning. While some proposals to privatize Social Security require raising the retirement age, cutting benefits, raising taxes and burdening the federal budget, other proposals are worth considering more fully.

• Tap into the federal budget surplus

One proposed reform would use the federal budget surplus to strengthen the Social Security fund after 2032. That's far more equitable than using the surplus to cut taxes again for the well-to-do—as some in Congress would.

• Raise the payroll tax earnings cap Another proposal is to raise or eliminate the Social Security earnings cap. Right now, workers pay Social Security tax only on the first \$68,400 they earn. This means that a worker making \$68,400 a year pays exactly the same Social Security payroll tax as a Fortune 500 CEO who makes millions. It takes a worker earning \$68,400 three weeks to earn what he or she contributes to Social Security each year. It takes the average CEO one hour to do the same thing.

• Boost payroll tax

Other reform options involve slight increases in the payroll tax rate. Asking workers and employers to pay \$25 more for every \$10,000 earned would help replenish the fund. However, this strategy has the disadvantage of increasing taxes on all working families.

• Change investment mix of the Trust Fund assets

Investing a portion of the Social Security Trust Funds' built-up assets in the stock market could generate stronger returns for the funds while still protecting individual beneficiaries from risk. An investment mix that included some stocks, although still posing increased risk, would more closely mirror the investments of our largest and most robust pension plans. It would have a better chance of maintaining guaranteed, defined benefits without raising the retirement age than would individual retirement accounts.

• Raise wages for workers.

The more wages rise for workers earning less than \$68,400 (more than 94 percent of American workers), the more income Social Security receives from workers and employers.

—Laureen Lazarovici



aced with the prospect of spending her summer break mopping floors or filing papers, 14-year-old aspiring judge Denica Franklin came across an innovative summer program run by the Worker Center of Seattle's King County Labor Council. The program offered her the opportunity to write for a student-produced magazine, create her own website, go behind the scenes with workers at a local television station—and learn about the importance of unions along the way.

"Without a union, the boss can tell you to do anything," says Franklin, who wants to join the Air Force to earn money for college and law school. "With a union, you get benefits and can talk to your workers about your job."

That's exactly the lesson Franklin's teachers hoped she would learn during the seven-week Summer Youth Labor Training Program for teens between 14 and 19 years old. Twenty students take part in the program, which inte-

BY LAUREEN LAZAROVICI

grates classroom instruction on labor history, film screenings on social justice issues, interviews with union members working in a wide range of professions and field trips to worksites.

The activists participating in the King County summer school say it is crucial that unions reach out to young people if the union movement wants to lay the groundwork for future organizing and bargaining victories. "If I had had the opportunity to attend a program like this when I was that age, it would have given

me the knowledge earlier in life to be proactive," says Miguel Gomez, a business agent for Teamsters Local 174, which worked with the students. "It was tougher for me," he says wistfully. "I tried to organize a company and ended up quitting. I had to learn little by little."

Even before instilling a sense of activism in the students, Gomez and others involved say they have to teach basic union facts to combat the lack of labor history taught in schools and negative images from the mainstream media. "At first, the students were unaware of what a union was and they were surprised to find out about all the work it takes to organize a shop and negotiate a contract," Gomez notes.

Students learned about unions by talking with members at their worksites. One week, they went on a behind-the-scenes journey with members of Teamsters Local 174, following the trash from transfer station to a city dump. "I like to see the students get freaked out a little bit because it expands their horizons," says Wayne Au, one of the teachers in the program. During the school year, Au and another program instructor, Alonzo Ybarra, teach at an alternative school for at-risk youngsters. Both are members of the Seattle Education Association, an affiliate of the National Education Association.

While students were intrigued to meet workers such as customs agents at Seattle-Tacoma Airport, the worksite visits gave them a first-hand look at how unions not only protect wages and benefits but also give employees a voice in the workplace.

"The students have met actors and people on T.V. news who are in unions and they've met people who pick up their garbage who are in unions," says Ybarra. "They understand that if you have a union, you'll have a better quality of life. They're getting it."

Bolstering the field trips were in-depth interviews with workers referred to the program by local unions eager to help. Teamsters business agent Gomez was one of those interviewed, and he used the opportunity to impress upon students that some professionals who they might not have realized are unionized—such as doctors and police officers—are part of the labor movement. "I also described my job and why I believe in the union, so they could understand it when they get into the work environment," Gomez says. The oral histories build on a smaller program Seattle's labor council ran last year, pairing five students with workers of similar backgrounds.

"We were impressed with the impact union members had on students," says Cathy Lowenberg, the King County Labor Council school-towork labor liaison and program director. "The students really identified with the workers, who had struggled in their lives as immigrants, sometimes having to learn English as their second language. They looked at how these factors affected them in the workplace and how unions help them," says Lowenberg. "The students asked much deeper, personal questions than I would have anticipated." At the end of the summer, the students stitched together the interviews into performance art and staged it for local union members.

This year, the interviews were the backbone of a student-published magazine, which also included articles on careers and workers' rights, reports on the field trips, as well as

restaurant and movie reviews. The students know that the computer skills they learned are indispensable for success at school and work. "Next year I will be on the yearbook staff, so the program will help me a lot," says 17-year-old Mary Thao.

And while students everywhere have long viewed showing movies in school as an ideal chance to nap or goof off, these students watched the films carefully chosen for the summer program through the eyes of workers struggling for dignity. "Students might have seen these movies, but we are focusing on the labor issues and issues of race, gender and immigration status and how employers use those things" as a club against workers, says Lowenberg.

Among the films is "Matewan," John Sayles' epic about union struggles in West Virginia coalfields in the 1920s. "It was really unfair that the company owned everything in the town," says 17-year-old Kenny Bui after seeing the film. Unions, says Bui, "protect you from being fired. They get you pension plans and benefits, and only charge a small fee."

The Seattle summer program is one of many spearheaded by unions. In Kenosha, Wis., for instance, unions sponsor a "sister-to-sister" summer with the Girl Scouts of America.

Office and Professional Employees takes part



New friends: Dean Bui (left), one of 20 teens who took part in a youth summer program spearheaded by the King County Labor Council, interviewed Paul Green, a CWA acting chief steward.

in a summer camp in Lake Wappapello, Mo., where children form their own "unions" and "bargain" on issues such as bedtime. "Most students work part time while they are in high school and college, but fewer than 6 percent of all workers under the age of 25 belong to a union," notes Tony Sarmiento, assistant education department director at the AFL-CIO. "They are very familiar with the nonunion world of work. These programs help them learn about unionized jobs and employers, while developing their writing, communication and critical thinking skills."

As students clicked away at their computers and followed workers on the job, the teachers at the Summer Youth Labor Training program knew they were building for the future.

"All we can hope for is that once they finish school, if they have a choice between a union job and a nonunion job, they choose the union one, or choose not to replace a worker on strike," Ybarra says. "If a union organizer comes in to where they work, they will be more likely to listen."

Designing an Effective Youth Program

A key part of organizing for the future is reaching out to young people to teach them the importance of unions. One way to do that is to create a union-backed summer employment and education program. The King County Labor Council recommends the following:

- Bring in rank-and-file members as part of the program.
- Raise funds for the program through unions, which is more effective than hunting for grants.
- Find out what teachers and counselors in the schools expect the program to accomplish. For instance, educators often want evidence that the program will help students gain skills that will help them in the workplace.

For more information on setting up a youth employment program, contact Cathy Lowenberg School-to-Work Labor Liason, Worker Center, King County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, 2800 1st Ave., Room 252, Seattle, Wash., 98121-1114; email: wc@ricochet.net.

Making waves: Dustin Carter tries out one of the two wetsuits he received from Fire Fighters Local 336, which also made him an honorary firefighter.

MARK STAHL/MIDDLETOWN JOURNAL

FIRE FIGHTERS' GIFT FROM THE HEART

ustin Carter, a browneyed, blond 9-year-old from Middletown, Ohio, loves to swim. So much so that even after complications from meningitis in 1994, when Carter received four artificial limbs, he kept up his favorite sport. But maneuvering across the pool deck now scraped his tender skin, even through the sweat pants worn as protection from the sun.

The solution? Two custom-fit wetsuits donated by Middletown Fire Fighters Local 336. "When I heard about his need, it really

touched my heart," says Local 336 President Capt. Don Hardin. The local's executive board voted to donate the profits from its annual Fire Fighters' Ball in February to buy two wetsuits. IAFF member Perry Wallace made the alterations, even adding leather patches for additional cushioning. And the union bought him a yearlong pool membership.

Local 336, which works with the Make-a-Wish Foundation and Dream Foundation in assisting Middletown-area children, presented the suits to Carter in a poolside ceremony, where they also made him an honorary fire-fighter. Carter's determination and the Fire Fighters' support were featured in the Middletown Journal and the Cincinnati Enquirer, as well as on Dayton, Ohio, television.

TRAILBLAZER FROM TROY

ate Mullany, a young Irish immigrant laundry worker, organized the all-female Collar Laundry Union in Troy, N.Y., in February 1864, and led a subsequent week-long strike. As a result, hundreds of launderers, starchers and ironers who worked 14-hour days for \$2 a week received a 25-cent-a-week raise. In 1868, Mullany gained national recognition when she was appointed to the union's national office.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton honored Mullany's courage and determination during a visit to the Kate Mullany House in Troy in July as part of her "Save America's Treasures" tour. The Mullany house, now pri-

vately owned, was designated a
National Historic Landmark and
added this year to the National Register of Historic Places, as a result of
efforts by the New York State AFLCIO and Rep. Mike McNulty (DN.Y.). The National Park Service is
considering the site for a future
national labor museum and possibly including it as part of a larger
national park that would tell the
story of blue-collar workers.

Paul Cole, secretary-treasurer of the New York State AFL-CIO and former history teacher is now an advisory board member on a presiand Albany (N.Y.) Central Federation of Labor President Josphine Sano pay tribute to Kate Mullany, a 19th century labor activist whose house is now a National Historic Landmark.

advisory board member on a presidential panel studying sites honoring American labor history. The board has accepted four more sites and is exploring others, which Cole says may eventually lead to a national network of landmarks honoring working women and men.



BURDERLINE TACTICS

magine you're the vice president of human resources for the nation's second largest chain of bookstores and you've written an anti-union manual. Now imagine finding your detailed screed posted on a union website. That happened to Anne Kubek of Borders, Inc., a chain of 204 superstores that racked up net sales of more than \$1.2 billion in 1997.

Union Awareness Training for Borders Managers describes its employees as "intelligent, involved and committed," and says: "They also often feel over qualified and underpaid. In most cases they are."

Describing to store managers "why we don't believe that a union is a good thing for Borders," the manual notes, "We must be consistent in our message, which can be difficult if you personally believe that unions are a good thing...."

Borders alerts managers to the "Early Signs of Union Activity," including, "Employees start gathering to talk in areas that are off the beaten path" and "Employees start having regular meetings or bar nights without inviting man-

agers...." Even worse: "New vocabulary may creep into employees' conversations. Union terms such as seniority, grievance, bumping, job security and job posting may appear in conversations." Borders indicates such language isn't "normal" for "intelligent, involved and committed people."

The UFCW, which is organizing Borders employees, now represents workers at four stores. The "awareness" manual details the company's response to these organizing drives. The manual can be accessed online through a website of the International Workers of the World at: parsons.iww.org/~borders/manual.





20 and out: UMWA President Cecil Roberts (left) congratulates Dovid Jones, the first Mine Worker to qualify for the union's new "20 ond out" pension program.

Wal-Mart's Red, White and Green Sales Campaign

Retiring But Not Shy

hen he was 20 years old and just starting his career as a coal miner, David Jones was not thinking about pensions. Wages, benefits and vacation were certainly on his mind, but retirement seemed a lifetime away. Now Jones is 44, a father of four and a grandfather of two. And thanks to a recent improvement in the Mine Workers contract, he doesn't have to worry about retirement.

Jones is the first UMWA member to receive benefits under the "20 and out" provision, which guarantees retirement income to workers with 20 years of service in the event of mine closures or long-term layoffs. Before the contract was changed in December, coal miners risked losing large portions of their potential pension benefits if they retired before turning 55.

"People feared they'd be laid off and feared that all the time they put in would go out the window," says UMWA President Ceeil Roberts.

Now workers are protected. "All workers should look to this and know that to be a United Mine Worker is truly a blessing," Jones said at a ceremony celebrating the new pension provision at UMWA headquarters in Washington. D.C.

Jones, whose mine closed in December. lives in Benham, Ky., and will get about \$633 a month from the pension plan. which will add up to about \$85,000 between now and when he turns 55. He'll use the pension fund to cushion the transition to his new job as a service repairman for Bell South—where he will be a member of the Communications Workers—and to save for his oldest son's college education.

Wal-Mart's "Buy American" ad eampaign, which includes U.S. flags, patriotic symbols and redwhite-and-blue displays, is designed to make eonsumers think the giant store earries lots of American-made products. But look behind the red, white and blue and you're likely to find green.

Wal-Mart's slogans, "Buy American," "Bring It Home to the U.S.A." and "Made Right Here," are an attempt to mislead consumers into thinking they're buying American-made products, says UFCW President Douglas Dority. Citing the findings of a new report on Wal-Mart, Dority says that of 895 surveyed apparel products sold by Wal-Mart, 80 percent are made in 43 other countries. Worse yet: Of the surveyed products that were directly imported and distributed by Wal-Mart, rather than by other suppliers, only 2 percent were American-made.

And although the American flag is a prominent part of one of Wal-Mart's most popular private clothes labels, Faded Glory, only 5 percent of the Faded Glory products surveyed were made in the United States. Dority also noted the company did not disclose the imported status of the clothing it sells on its Internet site, despite Federal Trade Commission regulations requiring such disclosure.

Based on the report, produced by the UFCW and the AFL-CIO Food and Allied Service Trades Department, Dority has written the Federal Trade Commission and the attorneys general of all 50 states urging an investigation of Wal-Mart for alleged violations of deceptive advertising laws. The full report, Wal-Mart's Buy American Program: Using Patriotism to Deceive the American People, is available at www.ufew.org/wm.html.

A High-Flying Tribute

e was anything but "wimpy" when it eame to fighting for his members. Now the affectionate nickname for the late William Winpisinger is part of aviation history. In a singular honor for a union leader, TWA ehristened a new Boeing 757 in honor of Winpisinger and rolled out the aircraft with "Wimpy" painted on the outside of the cockpit. Winpisinger led the Machinists for 12 years, and sat on the TWA board of directors for eight years until his death in 1997.

Top flight: IAM President Thomas
Buffenbarger (far right) joins
Peorl Winpisinger to welcome the
Boeing 757 named for the late
William Winpisinger.

Fit to a T

While on Capitol Hill to urge stronger anti-sweatshop laws during UNITE's 2,000-strong lobbying day July 29 (see September America@work), UNITE members Alberta Arsenault and Pat Murphy made an unpleasant discovery at the House of Representatives gift shop: The "U.S. Congress" t-shirts for sale earried "Assembled in Honduras" labels.

Believing that shirts emblazoned with the U.S. Capitol ought to be made in the United States, Arsenault and Murphy swiftly took action. The pair—who were both laid off when their New Jersey apparel factory sent work offshore—contacted their congressman, Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R), who fired off a letter to Jay Eagen, chief administrative officer of the House, requesting that House gift shop shirts be 100 percent American-made.

Thanks to the UNITE duo's call to action, the gift shop's new policy will make clear "on purchase orders that the merchandise to be provided is to be both made and assembled in the USA," Eagen says.

The Corporate AGE Interests spend an average \$8.4 billion

pecial interests spend an average \$8.4 billion
each year in Washington, D.C., to lobby the federal government—with anti-worker corporate backers such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which spent
\$7 million in the first half of 1997 alone, accounting for
the lion's share of that amount. When it comes to soft
money (political contributions that have no legal limit
because they are not directed to candidates or political
parties), Republican lawmakers are the big winners, with
the insurance industry alone giving a whopping \$1.7 million to the GOP in the first half of 1997—much of that
money spent on fighting health care for working families.

BIG CORPORATE SPENDERS Lobbying by Top Million-Dollar Spenders

January 1-June 30, 1997

American Medical Association \$8,560,000

\$7,000,000

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

\$5,900,000

Philip Morris General Motors

\$5,200,000

Edison Electric Institute

\$5,000,000

Pfizer Inc.

\$4,160,000

United Technologies Corp.
AT&1

64 420 000

General Electric

\$4,120,000

Citicorp

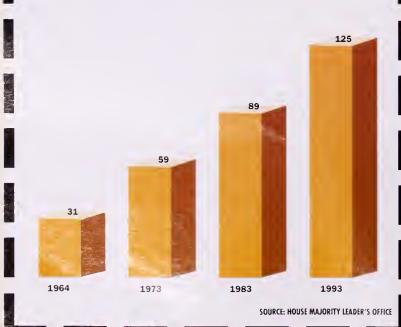
\$4,100,000

Christian Coalition \$4,040,000

SOURCE: CENTER FOR RESPONSIVE POLITICS

Number of Lobbyists Increases by 400 Percent in 30 Years

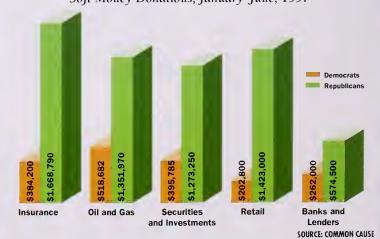
Lobbyists per Member of Congress



Insurance Industry Set to Fight Health Care

Working families have a tough fight ahead to pass legislation that would expand access to and improve the delivery of health care. In the first half of 1997, contributions from the insurance industry totaled \$2,552,990 to Democrats and Republicans, much of that money going to fight health care legislation.

Soft Money Donations, January-June, 1997



New from the AFL-CIO

Equal Pay Website

Equal pay has been the law of the land since 1963, but women still earn just 74 cents for every dollar men earn. Because gender-based wage discrimination persists, the average 29-year-old woman with a college degree will lose \$990,000 to the pay gap over her career.

A new AFL-CIO website, www.aflcio.org/ women/equalpay.htm, enables working women

to find out just how much they have lost—and will lose—from a lifetime of pay inequity.

The interactive website allows browsers to enter their current age, salary and education level and then get answers to questions such as, "How much will the pay

gap cost you?" and "What could you have purchased with that money?" That 29-year-old woman could have purchased 236 years of day care for a child, fixed 1.7 million macaroni and cheese dinners or taken a vacation on the beach in Jamaica for 14 years.

The site also guides women on how to fight unequal pay by writing their elected representatives, learning how to file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, talking to a shop steward and

joining a union. Because union contracts help ensure a fair workplace, union membership helps narrow the pay gap. In 1996, union women earned 16 cents less an hour and all women earned 26 cents less an hour for every dollar earned by men.

America's booming "new economy" has left behind the 21 million Americans who work

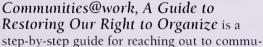
part time, according to a new AFL-CIO report, *Part-Time Work*, *Full-Time Bills*. Part-timers earn about 30 percent less an hour than full-time workers—even when they bring the same skills, education and experience to the job. And while 75 percent

of full-time workers have health insurance, only 20 percent of part-time workers are covered. Part-timers are also three times less likely to have pensions. For a free copy of the report, call 202-637-5042.

It's Time for Justice at Avondale, a new AFL-CIO report, outlines how Avondale Industries in New Orleans is using tax dollars to wage a drawn-out war against its shipyard workers, who voted to unionize five years ago

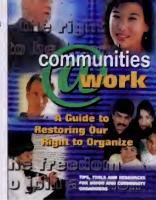
only to be met with a relentless and illegal campaign of firings and harassment. It also spotlights the shipyard's poor safety record: An average of one worker a year has been killed

at Avondale during the past 30 years. Single copies are free. Call 202-637-5042.



nity groups and enlisting them as allies in the

struggle to exercise the right to organize. The new AFL-CIO publication demonstrates how workers can spread the message that well-paying unions jobs are good for the community. Copies are \$7.50 for a single issue; discounts available for bulk orders. Contact the AFL-CIO Support Services Dept., 815 16th Street, NW, Washington,



D.C. 20006 or call 202-637-5042

Publications



The 1998 edition of KIDS COUNT Data Book, produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, focuses on the need for quality child care for America's low-income working families. The 184-page

guide provides statistics and state-by-state rankings in areas such as the percentage of children in poverty. The foundation makes the case for providing "safe, supportive and affordable child care" to low-income families, stressing that failure to provide these basic underpinnings will "mean nothing less than the betrayal of the promise of welfare reform...." Available free from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Attn: *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, 701 St. Paul St., Baltimore,

Md. 21202; 410-223-2890. The book also can be accessed at the foundation's website, www.aecf.org.

Disconnected: How Six People from AT&T Discovered the New Meaning of Work in a Downsized Corporate America, by Barbara Rudolph, examines changes in the lives of workers after they were downsized out of their jobs by AT&T. The author looks at how the

perception of job security has changed, especially for middle-aged men, and highlights the areas in which Maggie Starley, one of 5,500 telephone operators the company laid off in 1994, received better treatment because of her union (CWA) membership. \$25. Call The Free Press toll free at 800-323-7445.



In From the Ashes of the Old: American Labor and America's Future, Stanley Aronowitz, a former union organizer and sociology professor at City University of New York, says that the future of the American labor movement depends on whether unions broaden their tent to encompass the concerns of the entire workforce, commit vastly larger resources

to organizing and establish an independent political platform. His solutions include strategies already launched by the union movement, including organizing the South, the working poor, white-collar clericals and professionals and managers. \$25 hardcover. From Houghton Mifflin.



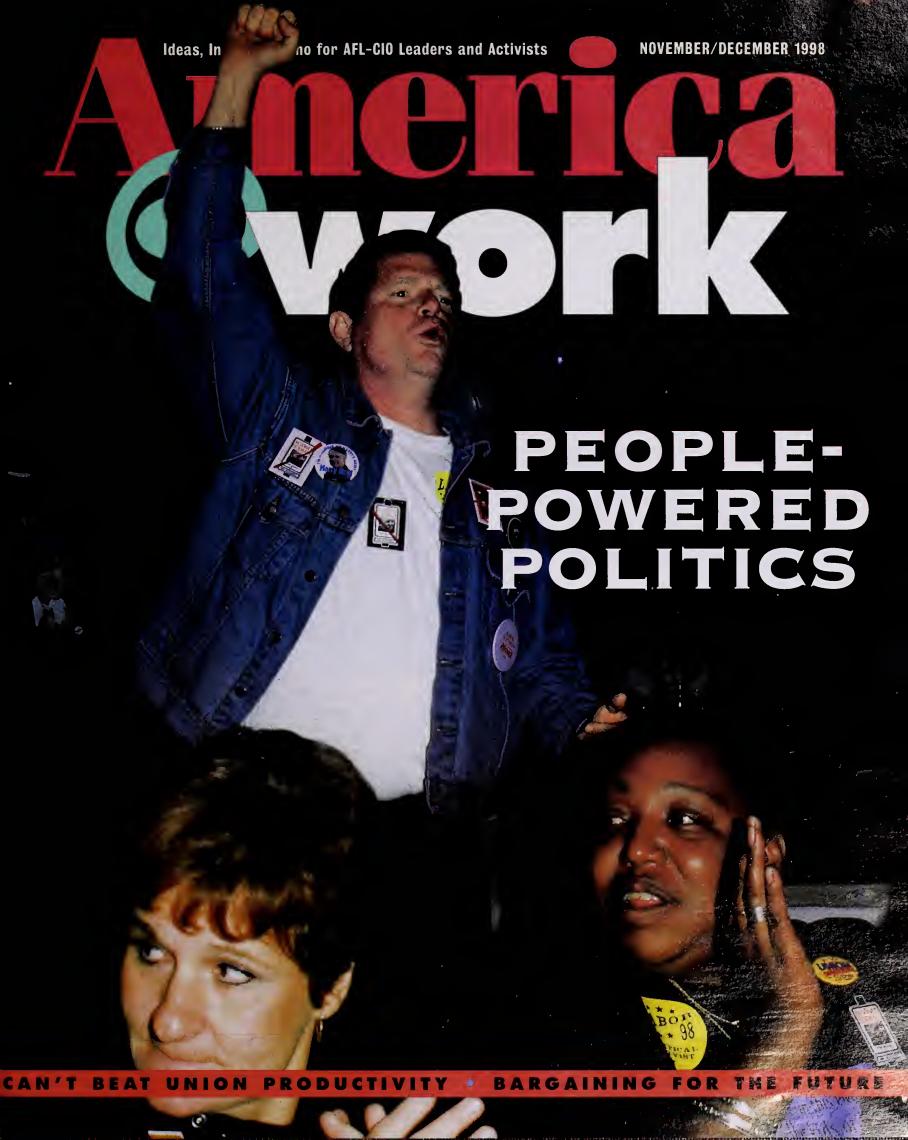
They don't want you to vote. Too much is at stake:

- Changes to Social Security that can benefit workers—or Wall Street.
- A Patients' Bill of Rights that guarantees that doctors, not HMO bureaucrats, make medical decisions.
- Quality education in safe, well-equipped schools.
- Equal pay for working women and their families.

- Trade legislation that protects corporate interests at the expense of workers.
- The right of workers to improve their lives and futures through union membership.
- Workplace safety and health legislation, including a strong ergonomics standard.
- Wage and benefit rates for part-time and temporary employees that are the same as for full-time employees doing the same work.

THEY'LL BE AT THE POLLS NOV. 3 WILL YOU?

VOTE NOVEMBER 3





ideas and Views From You

ENGINEERS, PROGRAMMERS GET ORGANIZED

@ "The new Washington State hightech workers' organization, WashTech (http://washtech.org), put together just a few months ago, has hit the ground running. They now have 1,200 people on their mailing list, have paid full-time staff, have become a CWA affiliate and so on. This is quite a contrast to the stereotypical notion of programmers and engineers as being unable to organize on labor issues." -Norm Matloff, Professor of Computer Science, University of California at Davis

SAY WHAT?/HERE'S WHAT YOU SAY

ABOUT HOW YOUR UNION HAS INVOLVED THE COMMUNITY IN ORGANIZING CAMPAIGNS:

(a) "Our month-long strike this summer by 6,300 new members at Southern New England Telephone (SNET) in Connecticut succeeded in part because of the union's aggressive outreach...including...the extensive solidarity network of campus, community and church organizations developed by [HERE]....We also brought leaders of the recent telephone workers' strike in Puerto Rico to meet with SNET strikers and activists in the state's large Puerto Rican community....We have since joined forces with Connecticut Citizen Action in a [public utility] proceeding that will hopefully create a formal role for SNET workers in monitoring customer service quality on an ongoing basis."—Steve Early, CWA International Representative, North Haven, Conn.

NEEDED: A VOTING REPORT CARD

@ "I read every issue and am inspired to do what I can to contribute to the betterment of workers.

"Please consider reprinting in every issue of America@work currently proposed House and Senate bills relevant to labor issues....I'd like to also suggest a voting report card on bills vital to working Americans."—Katheryn L. Morse, Carpenters Local 12, Syracuse, N.Y.

[Editor's note: The AFL-CIO Congressional Voting Record for 1996-1997 is available online at www.aflcio.org/vrecord] When you see

unions@work

and our members@work

and collective power

in our

communities@work,

that's when you see



Starting now, how will your union work to hold lawmakers elected Nov. 3 accountable to working families?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

America@work

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ECONOMICS EDUCATION = POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

The more that union members know about how our economy works—or doesn't work-such as the growing wage gap, unequal pay for women, the decline in pension coverage and tax breaks for big business, the more likely they are to understand the importance of political involvement. That's where America@work has come in quite handy. As political director for the SEIU Ohio State Council, I have been able to use and adapt your articles on economics education as part of our efforts to mobilize our members for the fall elections." -Patrick Green, SEIU Ohio State Council

GOOD JOB

@ "We find America@work much improved over the AFL-CIO News. Excellent photos, easily readable, good articles with real bite. Keep up the good work."—John Reeder, executive vice president, AFGE Local 2211, Washington, D.C.

WORKING FAMILY ISSUES ON THE AIR

(a) "Why don't the unions mount a vigorous campaign to insist that their point of view be presented on national television business programs? Why don't they demand a regularly scheduled half-hour program devoted entirely to interests of working people? Or why don't they put together their own programs to sell to the networks? Even better, why not join with other unions to fund a network for working men and women?"—Elinor Hartshorn, Ph.D., Springfield, Mass.

AFL-CIO affiliates at encouraged to reprin or excerpt articles in America@work.



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E-mail: atwork@aflcio.org Internet: http://www.aflcio.org





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When it comes to productivity, union worksites beat nonunion firms hands-down

BARGAINING FOR THE FUTURE

More and more unions are bargaining to organize—negotiating contracts that make it easier to sign up new workers—a strategy that goes hand-in-hand with the union movement's goals of changing to organize and strengthening the right to organize

PEOPLE POWERED POLITICS

Working families made their voices heard in the 1998 elections

WE'RE GOING TO TAKE OUR SHIPYARD BACK'

Five years after they voted for union representation, workers at Avondale are still fighting for their right to organize,

battling a company that is using taxpayer money to wage one of the most viciously anti-union campaigns in decades



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HERE wins card-check

for 4,336 Las Vegas workers, building trades unions construct an organizing movement in Boston

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Union-sponsored education basics

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Union book project a best seller, a beer bottle 'brewhaha' and more

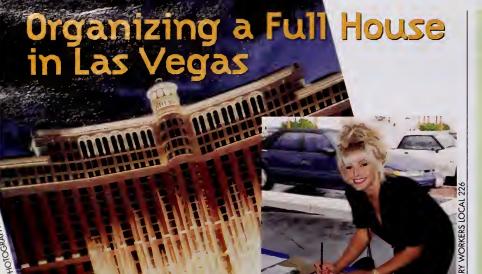
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A novel approach to union history for the holidays

urrents



A sure bet: Befare successfully organizing 4,300 workers through card-check recognition at the posh Bellagia Hatel in Las Vegas, Culinary Workers Local 226 negotiated a neutrality agreement with the employer.

hen a majority of the more than 4,300 workers at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas signed union cards seeking to join Culinary Workers Local 226, the October victory demonstrated again how years of strategic organizing within the hotel industry, based on neutrality agreements and card-check recognition, can create the momentum for ongoing organizing success (see "Bargaining for the Future," p. 9).

After battling hotel owners who fiercely resisted workers' attempts to win collective bargaining rights, Local 226 and Bartenders Local 165, both HERE affiliates, now represent 90 percent of the hotel and casino industry along the famous Las Vegas Strip. That kind of strength, says Jim Arnold, Local 226 secretary-treasurer, enables the unions to achieve neutrality agreements with employers such as Steve Wynn, owner of the Bellagio and other Mirage Inc. properties. Under neutrality, the employer agrees not to campaign against the union and to let employees decide if they want a union without employer interference. Local 226 negotiated a neutrality agreement with Wynn at the Golden Nugget in the early 1990s, and Bellagio is the third Wynn hotel and casino Local 226 organized since the agreement.

Card-check agreements avoid costly and time-consuming National Labor Relations Board elections, but it takes work to get the cards signed. "That's where we did something a little different," Arnold says. Instead of staff organizers, the union mobilized shop stewards from the Mirage, Treasure Island and the Golden Nugget—all Wynn properties.

The gambling capital's booming economy brings about 5,000 new workers a month to the area, and many find jobs in the gaming industry. "Their first question can be 'what's a union?'" Arnold says. But after union hotel workers tell them about decent wages, benefits, job security and respect on the job, they "understand how strong they are when they are really together" and are ready to sign authorization cards.

UNION MADE MATTERS

or decades, "Union Made—It Does Matter" has been the motto of Fechheimer Brothers, a Cincinnati-based clothing manufacturer. The company even includes

"Union Made in the USA" labels inside the uniforms it makes for police off cers, fire and EMS personnel, postal workers and bus drivers—nearly all union members. But despite Fechheimer's history, the actions of new CEO Patrick Byrne are anything but union-friendly.

Unian made charade: Fechhein workers' campaign far justice won strong backing from labor councils around the cauntry, including the Bergen Caunty (N.J.) Central Labor Cauncil,

where treasurer Charles Matt

displays a petitian of support.

After Byrne became CEO, Fechheimer shut down a union plant in Cincir nati, firing 80 UFCW union workers and transferring their work to nonuni Sol Frank Uniforms in San Antonio, Texas. When a majority of workers at San Antonio plant signed authorization cards with UNITE, Byrne threatene to close the shop and move it to Mexico.

Since then, almost 100 central labor councils have passed resolutions or sent letters to Byrne urging the company to reverse its anti-union stand and respect the right of workers to organize. Byrne then asked to debate the issuat labor council meetings. So far, Byrne has spoken to labor councils in Atlanta, Reading, Pa., Hagerstown, Md., and Bergen County, N.J., where had dreds of union members have heard Byrne declare that he is "pro-union" despite his anti-union activities. In these meetings, Byrne tried to justify cloing the UFCW-represented facility by first implying that it was the union's fault for not negotiating give-backs. Then he claimed he had to close the pladue to low wages in Mexico and El Salvador—even though the main competors to that plant are union plants in the United States. Union leaders say Byrne also avoided answering pointed questions about the wages and benef of workers at the San Antonio plant who are paid just over the minimum wage—even after 20 years service.

"It's not unusual to see a CEO lying to justify throwing union members of work. What's shocking about this guy is that he came to our house to do it—and then had the gall to try to pretend he's pro-union," says Terry Raric president of the Reading Labor Council.

Disaster aid: Unian members were on the scene in Puerta Rica helping victims af Hurricane Gearges, including residents of Villalba, where AFSCME member Flora Santiago (center, left) and UFCW member Luisa Aceveda (center, right) distributed faad. The AFL-CIO established an emergency fund that so far has raised \$32,500, including \$25,000 from the UAW, \$5,000 from the AFL-CIO, \$2,000 fram the Natianal Maritime Unian and \$500 from the Coalition of Labor Union Women. To contribute to the fund, call 800-435-7669 ar 800-HELP NOW.



Let Your Retirees Know About New Medicare Changes

edicare beneficiaries are receiving information about a new Medicare program, Medicare+Choice. Medicare+C will offer recipients more Medicare benefit options, including participation in managed care plans. Consumers should know that switching to Medicare+C is not required—it's an option. Beneficiaries can continue using traditional Medicare, and should not change coverage until they have the facts to make an informed decision, according to the Health Care Financing Administration, which administers the program. Beneficiaries who receive supplemental coverage through a former employer or union should be cautious about making a change and check with a benefits representative.

The counseling services of state health insurance assistance programs can provide more information about Medicare+C (phone numbers are listed in the Medicare handbook or bulletin sent to beneficiaries). In addition, many unions have retiree chapters and employee benefits offices that offer assistance.





reolly loved working in these jobs. But neither...provided me with o pension. Now that I om retired, Social Security is my only source of income. I'm afraid that if they put the

money in the stock morket, some people will lose. I think we need to preserve this

PUTTIN' ON THE BLITZ

1,000-member independent employee group at Intalco Corp. in Bellingham, Wash., voted overwhelmingly to join Machinists District 160 in October. The win resulted in part from District 160's weeklong "blitz," in which 40 two-person teams, armed with data on the facility's wages, benefits and conditions, made house calls to all bargaining unit workers. IAM's blitz strategy, which the union has mobilized in past campaigns, included establishing an in-plant organizing team and recruiting signatures for a "Majority Yes" petition. IAM local unions set up their own organizing committees to handle the one-on-one contacts.

SPOTLIGHT

important program."

In Kmart Campaign, UAW Members in the Driver's Seat

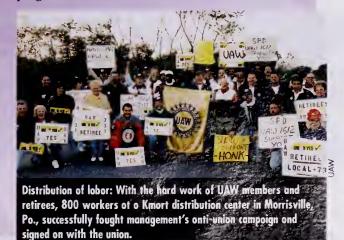
hrough multi-union action and the involvement of member-organizers and retirees, the UAW successfully outmaneuvered fierce antiunion tactics and signed up 800 workers at a Kmart distribution center in Morrisville, Pa., in October.

In response to management's campaign of intimidation and harassment, says Joe Trailes, who headed the in-house organizing committee, volunteer organizers from UAW Local 2177 and Local 1612, retirees from Local 731 and Sullivan Hamlet, president of UNITE Local 2603, which represents Kmart warehouse workers in Greensboro, N.C., pitched in their support.

Members of Local 2177, a General Motors warehouse, attended the Kmart workers' committee meetings to counter management's claims that the UAW doesn't understand their jobs. "We developed a rapport, and were able to let the membership know what was going on," says Terry Dittes, Local 2177 shop chairman.

Member organizers also prepared Kmart workers for likely anti-union tactics to come—closing

threats, intimidation and anti-union propaganda delivered at one-on-one meetings, in mandatory group sessions and through leaflets and films. The Local 2177 Women's Committee met with the women employees, "to let them know the UAW is not just a male union," says Dittes, while a UAW health and safety representative also held a two-day program.





BUILDING TRADES ORGANIZING

s building trades unions nail up one contract after another in the Boston area, their increased success has caught the attention of Massachusetts construction companies, which have funneled \$160,000 to a new industry group attempting to combat the resurgence of unions in the state. The group's media campaign attacks workers' efforts to improve their pay and working conditions, and soon will include newspaper ads fighting the

Building support: Neorly 100 industriol and public-sector workers turned aut for o September Street Heat action spearheaded by the Greater Bostan Labar Council in support of Bricklayers Locol 3's fight ogoinst the unsafe working conditions of Diversified, Inc.

> unions' efforts seeking pledges from state education officials to use only union workers to build new schools.

But construction groups are worried about more than an increasing number of union contracts: Throughout the state, organizing is also gaining momentum. "We are organizing their shops, so they are a little bent out of shape," says Joseph Nigro, general agent of the Boston Building Trades Council. "We are convincing workers that the union is the place to be. Nonunion shops can't hold on to their employees," he says.

"We've organized a couple of hundred people in the past few years," adds Jay Hurley, business manager for Ironworkers Local 7. "Now there's a track record. It becomes self-perpetuating."

Boston's union leaders say changing workers' attitudes towards organizing is the key to success. "Your members have to understand that if someone is willing to do what you do for half the price, there won't be any prosperity for anyone," says Hurley. Organizing, he says, "is the biggest thing you have to do."

Nursing Hame in October.

Brown, Darity and other

AFL-CIO Executive Council

members ore troveling to

state federations around

the country os port of the council's Committee 2000

ond Committee on Stote

ond Lacal Centrol Bodies.

JUMPing into Cooperation

n the wake of a bruising strike 12 years ago at the Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Mich., union leaders made a strategic decision: "We had to develop a working relationship [with management] because we were doing nothing but destroying each other," says Joe Abraham, president of the Greater Flint AFL-CIO Council. The result was the Joint Union Management Program (JUMP).

Now, a union representative sits on all of the medical center's committees, and has input in strategies to improve patient care and strengthen the hospital's overall operations. Last year, workers and management devised a plan that ensures employees a bonus every December. "The JUMP committee has been responsible for taking a financially strapped, city-owned hospital and turning it into a financially strong institution," says Abraham. "We are growing rapidly without cutting the quality of care or taking from the employees." And ever since the committee was established, there hasn't been a labor dispute at the hospital. "If we could get this kind of thing across the country, it would make life easier for workers," Abraham says.

eeking to form a union, the workers who harvest bananas at Chiquita's plantation in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, are enduring a brutal battle with their employer, which for many is also their landlord. The giant multinational—once known as the viciously anti-union United Fruithas suspended bus service, cut off the water filtration system and shut down the school and medical center for workers who live on the plantation, while locking out all workers from their jobs.

STITCH, the Support Team International for Textileras, a U.S. network of women, labor and community activists, recently traveled to Guatemala to meet Central American counterparts in the United States in an effort to sew together a global partnership of working women. STITCH includes participants from SEIU, UAW, UNITE, the AFL-CIO, the Coalition of Labor Union Women



Seamless partnership: Banana warkers ot Chiquito's plontatian in Puerto Borrios, Guatemola, are enduring o brutol battle to form o union.

and United Electrical Workers.

STITCH was active in Guatemalan workers' six-vear effort to win a contract at the Phillips-Van Heusen factory, now the only apparel-export company in Guatemala with a union contract. In turn, STITCH picks up organizing tactics from Guatemalan women.

When Rose Quintana, a STITCH member who works in the UAW's education department, visited Guatemala last year, she saw how workers maintain contact even under the toughest organizing conditions. Quintana met with women textile workers who were fired for trying to form a union and who kept up their organizing efforts in a country where making a house call often means a two-hour bus ride.

Street Heot: UNITE Vice President Cloyolo Brown, UFCW President Doug Darity and Mossochusetts Stote Federotion President Robert Hoynes joined with striking SEIU Local 285 warkers autside Sunrise



with the workers and hosted their



Spotlighting rurol poverty: Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts (left), IUE Locol 774
President Rick Snow and Electronic Workers President Edward Fire joined the Rev. Jesse
Jockson and union members in a 13-city "Close the Gop, Leove No One Behind" bus tour
through Appolochio to spotlight the plight of low-income workers in West Virginio, Kentucky, Ohio and Pennsylvania. The morch culminated in a 2,000-strong rolly in Nelsonville,
Ohio, Sept. 27. "The closs gop knows no color," Roberts said. "Eighty percent of us wha
work for a living make less money naw than we did in 1980 when you foctor in inflotion." AFSCME, CWA, HERE and UFCW members also joined in the march.

Concrete oction: More than 4,000 delegates to the Letter Corriers convention in Los Vegos rollied in o Street Heat demonstratian far 100 warkers who wolked off the job in on unfoir lobor proctice protest ot Precision Cancrete. NALC President Vince Sombrotto (second from left) ond Robert Geargine, president of the AFL-CIO Building ond Construction Trades Deportment (second from right) joined with members of the Building Trades Organizing Project in a show of solidarity far the striking warkers.

Child Labor Activist Honored with Shanker Award

ids should spend their early years in school, not in factories or fields—and Shantha Sinha is trying to ensure India's children that opportunity. The leader of a foundation that provides training and education for 10,000 children who otherwise would work at back-breaking labor, Sinha recently received the Albert Shanker International Education Award from Education International, a worldwide trade union federation.

"Child labor policies and education policies have to be formulated and operated in tandem," Sinha says. She believes that formal education is key to eradicating child labor and poverty, and laws requiring compulsory schooling are essential. She's involved in improving child welfare in 125 villages and 10 neighborhoods along India's east coast.

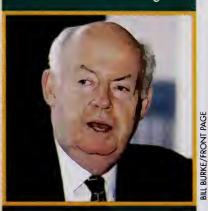
Education International was founded 24 years ago by Albert Shanker, the late president of the American Federation of Teachers. "Al taught me that education is one of the most powerful weapons against oppression," says AFT President Sandra Feldman. "I am proud that Education International has chosen this way to honor his memory."

OUT FRONT

orking families made our voices heard at the polls Nov. 3, shrinking the number of anti-working family representatives in Congress, defeating 1998's last remaining state "paycheck deception" measure, increasing the number of elected officials who are union members and electing worker-friendly candidates at all levels of government who bring us closer to enactment of a Working Families Agenda.

We were successful because we invested huge amounts of time and effort in educating our members about candidates' positions and turning members out to support worker-friendly candidates. Now it's time to tend our investment—by holding leaders accountable for their votes, building an enduring

For Working Families, the Next Round Starts Today



By John J. Sweeney

network for one-to-one communication with members and working toward an election process that's fair to working families.

Too often we wait until a few months—or even a few weeks—before an election to evaluate our leaders and let our members know whether the people they elected have kept their campaign promises to working families. We have an opportunity to put in place a long-term network of activists, to tell these members what we expect from them and to make accountability a year-round effort every year.

Our committed Labor '98 volunteers are the natural activist base for accountability efforts that will enable us to achieve real legislative gains for working families, as well as political strength for 2000 and beyond.

We can make their jobs easier by removing some of the obstacles that keep hardworking people from getting to the polls. Same-day registration and early voting are natural ways to build on Motor Voter successes, and we should all be working toward such approaches in our states.

And while we do, we also need to take steps now toward putting democracy back into the political process through real campaign finance reform. During this election season, we were out there fighting big business bazookas with BB guns and slingshots. It worked because of the incredible commitment of the thousands of union activists who phone-banked, distributed leaflets, attended rallies and joined in precinct walks to get out the vote for candidates who supported a Working Families Agenda. But the amount of money pouring into campaigns from the deep pockets of anti-worker business interests has been growing exponentially; there's no way we can match it. By Oct. 1, we were being outspent 12-to-1: Business had pumped out \$460 million in contributions, compared with \$39 million from labor, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. We did a great job fighting money-power with people-power—but the electoral process has gone seriously haywire, and if the money avalanche continues to escalate, working families will be buried.

We've got a lot of work to do in two years—but we've got the world's best asset for getting it done: the dedicated working women and men who made the difference in Election '98.

It's a Productive Workplace It Must Be Unio



CHRISTOPHER BALDWIN/SIS

nion members know that union shops are more productive than worksites without collective bargaining agreements. But just how much more productive? According to a recent study, the average union worksite is 16 percent more productive than a nonunion firm.

How to Compete: The Impact of Workplace Practices and Information, a study for the National Bureau of Economic Research by Lisa Lynch of Tufts University and Sandra Black of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, found that in union worksites in which employee participation is an integral part of quality programs, productivity is 20 percent higher than in the average nonunion firm. Regular staff meetings to discuss workplace issues, profit sharing and self-managed team work are behind increased productivity.

"Unions bring organization to the table," says Roy Murray, collective bargaining director for the Steelworkers. With the union structure, the workforce "is accustomed to reaching consensus" on issues such as work rules and job security. As a result, workers adapt more quickly to new team concepts.

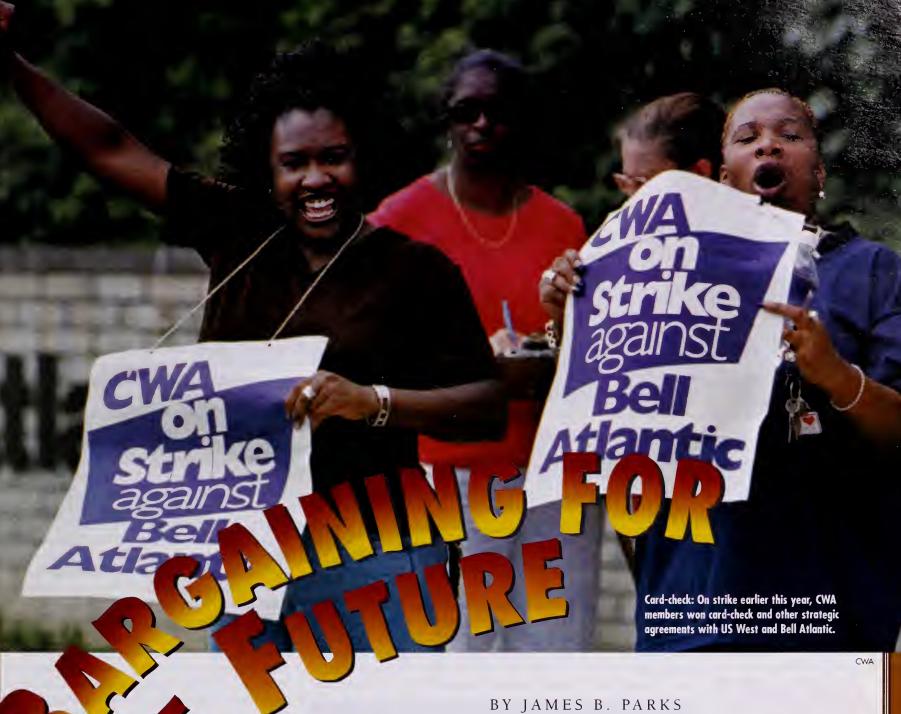
Lynch, Black and other union experts agree on several key reasons behind high union productivity:

- Union workers have a greater stake in their workplace. Many union contracts that call for worksite changes also contain job security clauses, so union members are more likely to make suggestions to boost productivity or, when necessary, to tell the boss when a plan is not likely to succeed, say Lynch and Black.
- Unions enable workers to communicate ideas to management. "When there are problems, you can resolve them through discussion, negotiation or arbitration. In a union shop, workers discuss, refine, iron out the kinks and approve new plans before management implements them," says Prof. Dale Belman of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. But in nonunion shops, when the boss decides on a plan without input from workers, Belman says decreased productivity often results because potential problems that could have been foreseen by front-line workers were not addressed.
- Union workplaces have lower rates of turnover, and productivity increases with experienced workers, according to Lynch and Black, who looked at 1,500 workplaces, 20 percent of which are unionized.
- Union workers are better trained. Union workers have more and better skills and are better trained than nonunion workers, Murray says. For example, through a partnership with employers, USWA members on worksite teams learn the skills and jobs of the other team members. This boosts productivity, Murray says, because all the workers are paid at the salary for the most skilled worker. More important, workers do not get bored because they can exchange roles.
- Seniority rules make it easier for skilled workers to share their knowledge with others. Older workers whose jobs are protected by a union contract are less likely to fear teaching younger workers the skills they have learned, Murray adds, which increases the skill level of all workers.
- Unions limit unilateral management. That forces managers to plan more carefully and to learn to manage better. Companies with unions soon learn they cannot boost production by increasing forced overtime, Belman says. Instead, they have to learn to manage better. That means training everyone, down to line foremen, to improve management techniques. "Numerous studies have shown that when a union is formed, the workplace gains more professional managers," Belman adds.

In the long run, Belman says, the open communication found in union shops enables discussions that allow both sides to accept the idea that as productivity goes up, everyone benefits.

- James B. Parks

For a summary of the study, go to www.nber.org. Copies of the report are \$5 each from the National Bureau of Economic Research, Attention: Publications, 1050 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138; 617-868-3900. Ask for working paper #6120.



y the time the Communications Workers finished negotiating new contracts earlier this year with the nation's telecommunications giants—AT&T, Bell Atlantic, BellSouth, SBC, US West, Ameritech and Lucent Technologies—each company had agreed to some combination of neutrality in organizing drives, expediting union elections or accepting card-check authorization recognizing union representation.

More and more unions are bargaining to organize—using bargaining strength and membership strength to build membership

For Culinary Workers Local 226 in Las Vegas, a central part of every hotel and casino contract the union negotiates is an agreement by owners that they will not fight union efforts to organize at any other properties in the city. The strategy works. In its most recent victory in October, the union gained recognition through card-check to represent 4,300 new workers at Bellagio, which is owned by the parent company of the Mirage. Local 226, an affiliate of HERE, now represents 40,000 mem-

bers—and is poised to gain thousands more.

Bargaining to organize—negotiating clauses in contracts that make it easier to organize new workers—is a strategy that more and more unions are putting to work. Bargaining to organize goes hand-in-hand with the AFL-CIO goals of changing to organize and strengthening the right to organize, says AFL-CIO Organizing Director Kirk Adams. "We need to use our bargaining strength and our membership strength to gain more members," he says. Because labor laws give an advantage to employers in organizing campaigns, unions have to look for better ways to level the playing field until there are better laws on the books, Adams adds.

"Waiting for the National Labor Relations Board doesn't work," says D. Taylor, Local 226 staff director. "This way, workers get a union without a long, protracted fight."

Bargaining-to-organize strategies

Unions have to grow to survive, says Larry Cohen, executive vice president of CWA. "Power on the job is what unions are about. Numbers are critical to everything a union can do. So it just makes sense to bargain for organizing in the contract." To have real power, union leaders say you have to gain a critical mass of members in an industry. If you only represent 40 percent of an industry, it's hard to have power. But if you have 80 percent, it's a lot easier.

The most frequently negotiated clauses in bargaining-to-organize efforts are neutrality, card-check recognition, area-wide agreement coverage, accretions and successor agreements. In neutrality agreements, employers promise not to campaign against the union and not to fire workers for talking about organizing a union or intimidating or coercing workers to vote against the union.

Under card-check recognition, the employer agrees to recognize the union after a majority of workers have signed union authorization cards

designating the union as their collective bargaining agent.

In an areawide agreement, the company or

he key to bargaining to organize is understanding your strength in the industry and using it to your advantage."

—Jim Pinto, collective bargaining director, IAM

owner agrees to recognize the union at all its present and future operations. Employees under these agreements may often work at separate facilities and may not share supervisors. An accretion clause specifies that when a company buys or builds a new facility that is fully integrated with an existing facility, all workers are members of the same bargaining unit and are covered by the same contract. For example, if a company opened a technology lab next to its unionized lab, an accretion would guarantee that workers at the new lab would be covered by the same contract. While unions can seek to accrete such facilities through NLRB proceedings, adding an accretion clause to the contract can prevent lengthy legal challenges by the employer.

Each of these types of agreements makes organizing easier and frees up resources for organizing nonunion shops. And the unions that have effectively bargained to organize attribute their success to getting the organizing message to members, mobilizing members, building community coalitions, negotiating strategically and adding political action to the tactical mix.

Getting the message to members

The first step in bargaining to organize is convincing members of the importance of organizing. "Companies are expanding, and as the market grows, we have less clout unless we grow. We have to educate members about the

correlation between union density and a good contract," Taylor says. "Our workers got it in two minutes. When they understand the significance of higher membership, they sign on and push and fight with the employer for the right to organize."

When CWA was negotiating its telecommunications contracts, its message underscored that organizing benefits workers' families. "We talk about how we're building a worksite organization," Cohen says, "not for the big union, which is far away, but for you and your family. We emphasize that it's important to have dreams for your family that matter."

The connection between membership strength and union power became clear to members of the Postal Workers when the Postal Service contracted-out its "Priority Mail" service to nonunion Emory Freight. The union launched its Save Our Service (SOS) campaign to show union and nonunion workers how their jobs were at stake. The opening of contract talks with the Postal Service, which is about 20 percent unorganized, and worker concern about the outcome provided a great opportunity for the union to press its cause, says Frank Romero, APWU organization director. SOS included a media campaign and a May 27 nationwide day of protest against contracting-out priority mail and congressional proposals to privatize the Postal Service.

In a recent edition of the APWU newsletter, under the headline "Contract Time Is Perfect For Organizing," the union urged local unions and rank-and-file members to make the connection between workers' bargaining goals and APWU's successful role in gaining job rights and improving pay and benefits.

Mobilizing members

After members understand the connection between union membership and bargaining strength, the next step is getting them actively involved in a bargaining-to-organize campaign to put the boss on notice that workers are serious. APWU members launched SOS informational pickets, and the international union bought radio spots in markets selected by local unions.

CWA made organizing nonunion facilities a priority in its contract negotiations. The ability to organize was part of an overall package of demands that would "create good jobs in the telecommunications industry," according to CWA President Morton Bahr. When talks broke down earlier this year, the workers went out on



Neutrality: A central part of every hotel and casino contract Culinary Workers Local 226 negotiates is an agreement by owners that they will not fight union efforts to organize at any other properties in the city, a strategy that has boosted the local's membership to 40,000.

strike at Bell Atlantic and US West, which sent a message to the companies. The message, according to Cohen, was "the root of what we are is power. We want to unite with our co-workers and we will have a brutal relationship with you if you fight us when we try to organize."

Community coalition-building

Organizers are finding that community allies can be the key to winning campaigns. "We never would have won at Ameritech without the support of Jobs With Justice and the community workers' rights boards," Cohen says.

Community support was behind HERE Local 217's win at the Omni Hotel in New Haven, Conn. When owners there tried to renege on an agreement to remain neutral in a union campaign, Local 217 turned to a coalition of community groups for help.

The city had given the developer a \$10 million grant to renovate a vacant building into a 306-room four-star hotel. When Omni bought out the developer, it began to back out of the neutrality agreement. A coalition of community groups, clergy, civil rights organizations, Yale University students and labor law experts convinced the city to hold hearings on Omni's refusal to honor the agreement. Students picketed the hotel. Allied groups canceled events there. Local clergy threatened to boycott the hotel.

The hotel took a big blow when the governor of Puerto Rico refused to attend a Yalesponsored conference at the hotel because of its anti-worker stand. In April, the hotel agreed to honor the neutrality agreement.

Strategic bargaining

The key to gaining area-wide agreements, accretion and successor clauses is understanding your strength in the industry and using it to your advantage, says Jim Pinto, the Machinists' collective bargaining director. The IAM's national agreement with Hudson General, an airport services company, provides that whenever the company opens or buys a new facility, the workers become members of the union.

At Rockwell, the IAM and USWA bargain jointly with the contracts extending to all locations, Pinto says. Under the contracts, if workers at any unorganized Rockwell facility express an interest, the unions and company hold a joint meeting with the workers. For the next 30 days, the company provides space in the plant for the union to sign up workers. If 65 percent sign authorization cards, the union is immediately recognized. If fewer sign, an election is set.



e have to educate members about the correlation between union density and a good contract."

—D. Taylor, staff director, Culinary Workers Local 226

Political action

Strategic bargaining goes hand-in-hand with political action when economic activity is funded by public sources—taxes, city or state bonds or training grants. "Unions should look aggressively for situations where public money is being used to deny workers the right to organize. Our bargaining to organize and our politics should be connected," says Adams.

Political action helped a coalition of San Francisco unions succeed in gaining a city ordinance that can require restaurant and hotel developers to enter into card-check agreements when the city has a financial interest in their developments.

In Milwaukee, allies of HERE Local 122 on the city council gained a pledge from Marriott hotels not to fight a union organizing drive at a new downtown hotel. After an intense lobbying campaign by the New York State AFL-CIO, a new law was enacted that bans employers, public and private, from using any state funds to run campaigns to block workers' organizing.

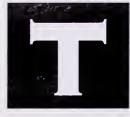
"Our work is growth and organizing, a significant portion of which is bargaining," Adams says. In the end, the connections between bargaining, organizing and politics come down to one thing: "We have to grow to survive."

Bargaining-to-Organize Basics

The most common clauses negotiated in bargaining-to-organize efforts are:

- Neutrality agreements: The employer will not interfere in the union organizing campaign.
- Card-check recognition: The employer will recognize the union after a majority of workers sign union cards.
- Accretions: The employer agrees that when it buys or builds a new facility, or adds new job classifications that are fully integrated with the existing bargaining unit, those additional employees become members of the same bargaining unit and are covered by the same contract.
- Successor agreements: The existing employer agrees to bind new owners of the company to the contract and to recognize the union.
- Area-wide agreement: The employer agrees to recognize the union at all its present and future sites of operation, such as new grocery stores, in the area.

PEOPLE-POWERED PEOPLE-POWERED POLITICS



he defeat of 1998's final paycheck deception measure, a ballot initiative in Oregon similar to California's Proposition 226, capped a year of triumph for working families over attempts to silence their political voice. It was one of hundreds of working family

gains across the nation as part of Labor '98's unprecedented grass-roots, union-member-to-union-member drive to educate and motivate working families and get out their vote.

While unions focused on one-to-one contact and "front-porch" politics, emphasizing a Working Families' Agenda of strong Social Security, quality health care, education and jobs, anti-worker business interests spent nearly half-a-billion political dollars *before* Oct. 1 to advance their corporate agenda—not including a \$10 million ad blitz blessed by soon-to-depart Newt Gingrich that saturated the airwaves in the final days of the campaign. By Oct. 1, business had outspent unions 12-to-1 on candidate donations.

"They've got the money but we've got the people...and the power to elect people who'll stand up for working families when it comes to Social Security, education, health care and good jobs," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "The 1998 elections usher in a new era of people-powered politics."

At the worksite, on the doorstep and on the telephone

AFL-CIO-affiliated unions, state federations, central labor councils, local unions and the Federation engaged in a large-scale grassroots effort that made one-to-one contact with individual union members and their families the driving force of Labor '98. The coast-to-coast education outreach and get-out-the-vote effort succeeded in registering half a million union household voters. A whopping 49 percent of adults in union households voted in this midterm election, compared with 33 percent of those in nonunion households. As part of Labor '98, the union movement sent 9.5 million pieces of mail to union members, made 5.5 million phone calls and created 511 fliers

on working family issues and distributed them to tens of thousands of worksites. Nearly 400 full-time coordinators worked with local unions, central labor councils and state federations on House, Senate, gubernatorial, state and local races.

That kind of individual outreach was critical to turning a projected 15 to 25 seat loss in the U.S. House into a five-seat gain for working family-backed candidates, and preventing the re-election of anti-worker incumbents such as Lauch Faircloth (R-N.C.), and Rep. Rick White (R-Wash.)

In California, a quarter of a million volunteer phone calls and thousands of house visits and precinct walks brought union members face-to-face with working families, who elected Gray Davis governor by an impressive 20 percent margin, ending 16 years of anti-worker rule by governors Pete Wilson and George Deukmejian. Building on the foundation established by the victorious fight against Proposition 226 this spring, union members also re-elected Sen. Barbara Boxer (D), who has earned a 93 percent working families voting



record. In Orange County, the central labor council worked with community and Latino groups to re-elect Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D) who won by just 984 votes in 1996, in a 12,000-vote victory over far-right candidate Bob Dornan, whom she defeated.

Meanwhile, the L.A. Federation of Labor's ambitious mobilization drive contacted almost all 472,000 Los Angeles County union members at least once. In one state assembly race, all 24,000 union households received half a dozen pieces of mail, two phone calls and a house visit—efforts that helped Assemblywoman Sally Havice win re-election in a hotly contested battle.

Oregon unions across the board came together to successfully fight Measure 59, the state's paycheck deception proposal aimed at taking public employees and teachers out of the political process. Unions made more than 40,000 contacts with union members and sent more than 250,000 pieces of mail to union homes to expose the real story behind Measure 59. The Oregon State Federation contacted 33,000 unregistered union members and urged





CHRIS FARINA

them to sign up to vote. More than 350 union members staffed phone banks while another 200 went door-to-door—all efforts key to stopping Measure 59 by 51 to 49 percent.

Defeat of Measure 59 means paycheck deception was stopped in 30 of the 31 states where anti-worker forces sought legislative passage or election wins this year (Wyoming was the only state to pass such legislation; it requires annual reauthorization of PAC payroll checkoff). Only a year ago, anti-worker millionaires promised to make so-called paycheck protection an issue in all 50 states. Although paycheck deception legislation surfaced primarily at the state level, the ballot initiatives were funded in large part by out-of-state zealots such as Indiana insurance millionaire J. Patrick Rooney and pushed by right-wing tacticians such as Washington, D.C., consultant Grover Norquist-wealthy backers who pushed the anti-worker measures as "payback for labor's success in the 1996 elections,' says Irv Fletcher, Oregon AFL-CIO president.

The failure of Measure 59 "shows that we have an ability to effect real change. The voice of working families was heard loud and clear here," says CWA Local 7901 member Diane Rosenbaum, who won a 67 percent victory in her bid for the Oregon House.

In North Carolina, every central labor council in the state took part in member-to-member mobilization, with hundreds of union members joining phone banks and leafleting plant gates. Their efforts contributed to the surprise defeat of Sen. Faircloth—who voted against working family issues 93 percent of the time in his six-year term—and returned three union-backed House members who had been targeted by anti-worker groups.

Nevada union members talked with 90 percent of the state's 80,000 unionized workers either at home or at work, and every local union in the Nevada AFL-CIO fielded a voter registration program. Statewide Election Day GOTV walks drew 700 union volunteers. Their efforts succeeded in the re-election of Sen.

Union sweep: Gathering at the Frontier Hotel on election night, Las Vegas union members celebrated significant statewide victories, including the election of 15 union members to state offices.

Harry Reid (D), confounding the pundits who expected Reid, with an 87 percent working families' voting record, to come up short against Rep. John Ensign (R) and his 6 percent working families voting record.

Thousands of union activists who made calls at 45 phone banks throughout Washington State and the 4,000 volunteers who collected the 288,000 signatures to get a minimum wage measure on the ballot can take much of the credit for the state's big Election Day wins: the re-election of Sen. Patty Murray (D), who has a 91 percent voting record, over Linda Smith, whose voting record is 23 percent, and passage of a proposal that gives Washington the highest minimum wage in the nation: \$6.50 an hour. In a blow to working families, a well-financed campaign for a ballot measure to gut Washington's affirmative action laws was approved.

To mobilize, educate, register and get out the working women vote, the AFL-CIO's Working Women Vote '98 project—in conjunction with the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and other women's and community groups—took part in more than 4,000 large and small events nationwide.

On Election Day in Baltimore, Women On the Move for Empowerment Now (WOMEN), part of the Metropolitan Baltimore Council of AFL-ClO Unions, waved signs at busy intersections urging voters to support Gov. Parris Glendening (D) in his successful re-election race against Ellen Sauerbrey. In Hawaii, more than 1,000 women rallied in support of the successful incumbent underdog gubernatorial candidate Benjamin Cayetano (D).

It's the issues

From the beginning, union activists focused on educating members about the issues and the

CONTACTING MILLIONS OF UNION MEMBERS ONE BY ONE

Behind Labor '98's sweeping success was a key lesson learned from the turn-around defeat last spring of California's Proposition 226: the importance of one-on-one, member-to-member contact. This election season, Labor '98 volunteers registered more than half a million union household members—and made contacting union members a staple of the 1998 election effort. More than 70 percent of union members, representing millions of voters, said they were contacted by a member of their union, according to election-night polling by Peter D. Hart Research.

Through face-to-face meetings at work and union member-to-member contact over the phone or through the mail, making each union member part of the election campaign successfully brought working family issues to the forefront—and in the process, built a dedicated volunteer base for future election battles. Here are a few highlights:

- The Steelworkers Rapid Response fax network connected 1,500 local unions around the country with half a million workers. Union members received candidate voting records and their positions on key union issues such as Fast Track and workers' right to organize from Rapid Response team coordinators who distributed the information at UAW worksites.
- Union members in Nevada talked with 39,000 other members and their families at home—reaching 90 percent of the state's registered union members.
- Working with the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council registered 5,500 new union voters, says Dan Radford, CLC executive secretary-treasurer.
- On one Saturday afternoon, 100 SEIU Pennsylvania State Council members in Norristown, Pa., signed up almost twice as many new voters as needed to overcome the 84-vote margin that put Rep. Jon Fox (R) in office two years ago. Voters retired Fox and his 32 percent working families voting record.
- Union members in New Jersey signed up 4,000 working family voters in just one day during one of several Working Families Voter Registration efforts sponsored by the New Jersey AFL-CIO.
- South Florida CLC worksite mobilizations reached more than 9,200 workers at 22 locations, says CLC president Cindy Hall.
- Through worksite visits and mailings, almost all of UFCW Local 400's 22,000 members were contacted three times before Election Day. In their outreach to the Baltimore-Washington-area grocery workers, UFCW officers and activists stressed working family issues such as Social Security, HMO reform, education and the importance of voting.
- CWA Local 9509 President Judy Beal says more than 3,000 workers at a Pacific Bell worksite in San Diego were reminded to get-out-the vote by CWA Local 9509 member volunteers through "desk-site literature drops" and break room and shift-change chats during the three days prior to the election.

One-on-one: AFL-CIO President John Sweeney precinct-walked with CWA member Diane Rosenbaum (right) who won a seat in the Oregon House of Representatives.



candidates who support a Working Families Agenda.

While union foes turned to mud-slinging in the last few weeks of the campaign, working families made it clear that their concerns, not party politics or the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, determined how they voted.

AFSCME President Gerald McEntee says the American union movement was successful in returning the debate to basic working family issues, such as strengthening Social Security, improving health care and education and job security.

"We found that when we debate these issues, working families are more likely to win. And we also found out that when we talk to the workers, the workers get it," says McEntee, political committee chairman of the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

In a post-election survey by Peter D. Hart Research and Associates, 67 percent of union voters said issues mattered most in this election and 75 percent said that the new Congress

should focus on the nation's problemsstrengthening Social Security, improving public education, protecting HMO patients—not on impeaching the President. The same polls showed that 64 percent of union members support their unions' involvement in politics.

Peter D. Hart President Geoff Garin says the election outcome reflects the fact that the "the hard right agenda of Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey just doesn't sell."

Along with the huge turnout of union voters, post-election surveys show that minority group voting played a major role in sending pro-working family candidates into office. Union members worked closely with African American, Latino, women's and religious groups to motivate and mobilize potential voters in their communities.

In addition to the thousands of alliances union members worked with in their communities, the Federation led the formation of the Coalition to Make Our Voices Heard, a non-

partisan coalition of labor, civil rights, Latino and women's groups, which aired radio spots to ensure that all of America's voices were heard on Election Day.

Gerald Messer, president of the Quad City, Illinois and Iowa Federation of Labor, says, "There's little doubt this election is going to focus Congress' attention on getting some real work done on our issues, like Social Security and health care." Messer and hundreds of Illinois unionists came together to re-elect Rep. Lane Evans over a candidate strongly backed by corporate interests—by 6,000 of the 194,000 votes cast. "But we can't sit back and say 'great, we won,' and go back to business as usual. We've got to keep our momentum up, keep building our volunteer base and keep building our power." @

BUILDING TRADES MESSAGE LOUD AND CLEAR

As part of its "REV UP '98" grassroots political campaign to register, educate and motivate union members, the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department mobilized union members in 11 congressional races across the country to support candidates who sported strong pro-working family voting records or positions on key issues, including: opposition to easing restrictions on reclassifying workers as independent contractors; support of the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage law; opposition to changing the law to make it easier to fire workers for union organizing activities and opposition to efforts singling out unions for special political campaign restrictions.

"Organized labor made a tremendous difference in the 1998 elections. Our voices were heard loudly and clearly," says Robert Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Council.

With special emphasis on reaching out to construction workers in voter registration drives, issue education and GOTV. the volunteers from BCTD affiliated unions helped put or keep nine of those 11 candidates in office, including Republican House members Jack Metcalf (Wash.) and Don Young (Alaska). Overall, BCTDendorsed candidates won 205 of their 207 races, including all of the 24 Republicans who won construction worker backing.

CLOSER TO 2000 IN 2000

Encouraging and training union members to run for political office is a key objective of the AFL-CIO and its affiliates—and in 1998, unions made significant headway toward the goal of fielding 2,000 candidates in 2000. More than 600 candidates ran for office, and 432 were elected or re-elected—a 78 percent success rate. In races for state legislative seats, union members in Hawaii won three out of three. In Illinois, union members went six for seven in state seats, while Indiana union candidates were victorious in 15 of 20 races. In Oklahoma, all six union candidates were elected, and in Nevada, it was 15 for 16, including Culinary Workers Local 226 member Maggie Carlton.

Carlton, a Treasure Island Hotel and Casino waitress, shop steward and mother of two, was elected with 58 percent of the vote. "Union members are ready to support people who are just like them, who go to work in the morning and collect a paycheck."

Many union members also ran for local offices where they can gain valuable leadership skills that can carry them to higher offices. In New Jersey, four union members, Chet Zimolzak, AFT Local 2373, Pitman City Council; Harry Elton, UA Local 322, Woodbury Heights mayor; Claire Poole, CWA Local 1084, Woodbury Heights City Council and Kathy Simon, AFT Local 3391, Monroe City Council, won municipal races with the backing of the Southern New Jersey Central Labor Council.

EVERE COINS

Fighting back:
Betty Dumas,
wha began
working as a
welder at
Avandale
shipyards in
New Orleans
as a teenager,
says she was
fired because
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In 1993, Avondale workers voted 1,950 to 1,632, for union representation. Yet today, workers at the New Orleans shipyard are still fighting for their right to organize, battling a taxpayer-subsidized company that has waged one of the most viciously anti-union campaigns in decades.

Betty Dumas began working as a welder at Avondale shipyards in New Orleans when she was still a teenager. "It was the only field a lady could get a decent amount of money with a high school diploma," says Dumas. After experiencing years of favoritism, low wages and dangerous working conditions, Dumas was ready to support a union organizing campaign. The last straw came when a new coworker got a raise and Dumas didn't—after

11 years on the job. She put on a union sticker. "All the feelings I had inside me came out," she says.

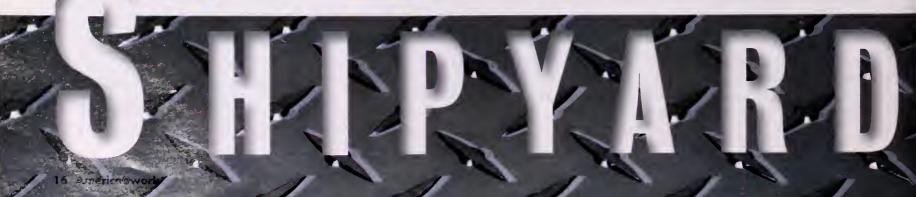
Dumas says she was fired as a result of her union activism, but then rehired, only to find a new company rule book Avondale required her to sign. It described the company as the nation's largest nonunion shipyard. When she wouldn't sign it, she got fired again. When Dumas asked for a pink slip so the company could not falsely claim she had quit, Avondale called the police, and six officers arrested her for trespassing and disturbing the peace.

"They put me against the wall in front of all my co-workers," she recalls. "They patted me down, and hand-cuffed me and took me to jail. It hurt me all the way down to my soul." She had raised her sons to obey the law—and now she was being hauled off to jail.

A corporate pirate

Dumas sees her experiences as part of Avondale's five-year war against its workers. In June 1993, Avondale workers voted 1,950 to 1,632, for union representation by the New Orleans Metal Trades Department. But workers say the shipyard, New Orleans' largest private-sector employer, has used every tool available—legal and illegal—to thwart their right to organize. Another pro-union worker, Joe Melton, an experienced pipe fitter, was punished by being reassigned—to a rowboat, where he pulled up old tree stumps from the Mississippi River. Avondale later fired him—allegedly because his life jacket became untied.

In the five years since workers voted to form a union, Avondale's has become the largest case in the history of the National Labor Relations Board, which lodged more than 100 unfair labor practice charges against Avondale, requiring 165 days of trial and resulting in 41,000 pages of transcripts. After workers' 1993 vote to unionize, the company filed objections to the election. In October 1997, following multiple delays, the NLRB ordered Avondale to bargain with the union. Avondale appealed to the 5th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, which is expected to make a decision by spring of 1999. Meanwhile, in February, Federal Administrative Law Judge David Evans found that Avondale CEO Al Bossier directed a campaign involving an "outrageous" number of unfair labor practices. The judge ordered Avondale to pay \$3 million in penalties and reinstate 28 workers fired for union activity, and took the extraordinary step of requiring Bossier to read a statement on workers' rights to all the





Community action: Hundreds of demonstrators rallied outside the Washington, D.C., Navy Memorial in September, calling for justice at Avondale.

employees. But because the company is appealing the decision, Bossier never read a statement or paid a fine. And he hasn't rehired any workers.

"Avondale is a corporate pirate and the Navy is providing them with safe passage," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said at a Washington, D.C., rally at the Navy Memorial in September. Betty Dumas adds, "We should be using our tax money to help seniors and kids," not to pay for union busting.

Taxpayer money to fight workers

The company is financing its violations of workers' rights with taxpayer money. As a major defense contractor, Avondale gets 80 percent of its funding from the U.S. Navy to build and repair ships. But while its warships defend democracy abroad, Avondale uses taxpayer dollars to fight democracy at its own site. In one instance, Avondale billed the Navy for 15,216 hours of employee time spent in anti-union meetings from February to June 1993. The gov-

ernment approved the invoice, considering it an expense indirectly used for shipbuilding, according to documents from the Defense Contracting Auditing Agency. The Navy now concedes that it has helped pay for legal costs Avondale racked up to fight union organizing, according to the publication *Inside the Navy*.

While Avondale might be one of the most flagrant violators of workers' right to organize, its tactics are by no means unique. All over America, employers are waging a secret war against workers who want to join together in unions. "This is going on all across the country," Sweeney told 10,000 marchers at a July 19 rally for Avondale workers under the blazing New Orleans sun. As an article in the *New York Times* notes, "Even some government officials point to the Avondale battle as proof that the nation's labor laws are cumbersome and replete with loopholes, and that companies intent on keeping unions out have become more adroit at exploiting them."

Union activists are fighting back, shining a spotlight on Avondale's war against workers and asking members of Congress and the Navy to urge Avondale to obey labor laws. The workers and the AFL-CIO's Metal Trades Depart-



Grieving: Scott LaJaunie's father was killed on the job at Avondale, where the death rate was three times higher from 1990 to 1997 than at any other major shipyard. At right, Scott's mother is comforted by Betty Dumas.

ment are building a coalition with clergy, elected officials, veterans and others, and taking part in prayer vigils, rallies and letterwriting campaigns. Workers throughout the shipbuilding industry and citizens angry about how their tax dollars are being spent have joined the Avondale workers' campaign. "We're going to take our shipyard back," Dumas declares.



LANE WINDHAM

Here's How You Can Support AVONDALE WORKERS

• Order and distribute the report It's Time for Justice at Avondale, available from the AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, 202-637-5042.

• Mail postcards to the Navy and

Defense departments voicing outrage at
the conditions at Avondale. For sheets of
preprinted postcards, contact the AFLCIO Metal Trades Dept., 1925 K St.,

* Contact your representatives in Congress and let them know you don't want your tax dollars used to fight Avondale workers' right to join a union.

N.W., Washington, D.C.

20006, 202-293-3812.

The deadliest shipyard

Safety is the top reason Avondale workers cite for forming a union, and for good reason: Avondale is the deadliest Navy-contracting shipyard, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. A July 1997 OSHA inspection found 37 safety violations at Avondale—19 of them defined as "serious," which means a high probability that death or serious physical harm could result. Since 1972, about one worker per year has died in accidents on the job. From 1990 to 1997, the death rate at Avondale was three times higher than at any other major shipyard with Navy contracts.

For the LaJaunie family, Avondale's safety failings are more than a cold list of statistics. In March, Tim LaJaunie, a 38-year-old welder at the shipyard, was killed on the job. "My dad will never see us graduate, or see us get married, or see his grandchildren," said Scott LaJaunie, one of Tim's three sons, at the Washington, D.C., rally. "I don't want other families to go through what I went through." When Tim LaJaunie was taken from Avondale to the hospital, the company didn't even call the family. Instead, they got the

news from the hospital. At the rally, Avondale workers solemnly read the names of their coworkers killed on the job, a long list of parents who, like Tim LaJaunie, would never meet their grandchildren.

Eligible for food stamps on a 40-hour work week

The workers at Avondale take pride in the massive, multimillion dollar ships they build. They run computers that cut 12-ton steel sheets with super-hot plasma torches. They install piping on the ships and weld together the boats' giant plates, bulkheads and frames. "We build the best ships in the whole U.S.," Dumas says. But they get small thanks for their work helping defend America. Avondale workers earn 29 percent less than those at other private shipyards with major Navy contracts, and 48 percent less than workers at federal shipyards, according to an AFL-CIO survey of union contracts at major shipbuilding companies. At Ingalls shipyard, just down the Gulf Coast from New Orleans, workers earn 50 percent more than Avondale workers. At the end of a 40-hour workweek, the average Avondale worker who supports a family of four is still eligible for food stamps.

Instead of raising wages, Avondale has hired foreign workers, getting special exemptions from federal immigration rules. Although the domestic labor market is tight, "there are lots of local people who would love to be trained for skilled jobs," says Peter Babin, president of the New Orleans Metal Trades Department. In fact, an NLRB administrative law judge in February found that Avondale refused to hire a qualified worker because she wore a "Union Yes" sticker when she applied for a job at the shipyard.

The support from elected officials and the community is giving Avondale employees the courage to keep fighting. "I used to be so scared of them," Dumas says of her Avondale employers. But "the tables turned" as workers and their allies began to come together to form a union. "The government says we have the right to organize if we choose to," Dumas says. "Something needs to be done."

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UNION-BACKED EDUCATION BASICS

was thrilled when I got my diploma from the Pennsylvania Board of Education," says AFSCME member Sara Willingham after she successfully completed the General Educational Development (GED) high school equivalency test. The 51-year-old mother of four recently attended classes twice a week for 10 weeks in a program sponsored by the District 1199 Training and Upgrading Fund for AFSCME Local 1199C in Philadelphia. Willingham, a resident care aide at Philadelphia Greenwich Services, plans to enroll in courses to become a certified nursing assistant. She says she felt great when her co-workers put up a banner celebrating her achievement.

Willingham's success in the GED program—and the experiences of thousands of unionists like her—is a key reason that unions often offer members, and in some cases, non-members, programs that help them attain a high school diploma through the GED or External Diploma Program (EDP).

"We are providing survival skills to our members," says Harmon Lisnow, executive director of the Steelworkers Institute for Career Development, Inc., in Merrifield, Ind., where GED preparatory courses are among several programs offered to members. "The way to stay competitive is not through lowering wages," he says. "You stay competitive through knowledge." The institute, a joint program of the Steelworkers and 13 steel companies, makes training available at 54 sites.

Some of the educational programs operated by unions are open to the public because they receive government funding—which also enables unions to reach out and provide a positive message about the role of unions in communities.

Jim Ryan, who directs the AFSCME program that operates the GED sessions Willingham attended, says nearly everyone who goes through the union's training is motivated by a desire to go on to college or other learning opportunities. More than 190 union and nonunion students are currently enrolled in AFSCME District 1199C GED courses, which are funded by employers and the state.

More than 25 million adults who lack diplomas could benefit from GED or EDP preparation, according to the GED testing service. Union-based education programs are critical because the corporate community—other than companies that work jointly with their unions to provide education—does little to meet the education needs of workers. A U.S. Department of Labor survey of 12,000 businesses in the mid-1990s found fewer than 3 percent provided formal training in basic reading, writing, arithmetic and English language skills. Downsizing, cost-cutting and part-timing are making it less and less likely that corporate support for basic worker education will increase.

At the same time, too many congressional leaders don't believe the federal government should have a leadership role in literacy education. The Clinton

administration currently is battling efforts

in Congress to decrease literacy funding, and few states add money to literacy efforts.

Tom Westrick, UAW site administrator for the Rick Holte Education Center in Janesville, Wis., says by enrolling in union-sponsored back-to-basics training, most workers gain confidence and a strong desire to continue their education, while expanding their opportunities to move up the job ladder. "Since 1991, we have had 40 graduates, and 37 to 40 percent go on to other learning situations," Westrick says.

"Lifelong learning comes in many forms, from finishing high school through a GED program to developing new job skills," says Morton Bahr, CWA president and chairman of the AFL-CIO Executive Council Education and Training Committee. "What has made these programs so effective is full union partnership and involvement. There is no question that continuing education is the key to the future for workers and their families; our responsibility is to ensure that working people have the opportunity to learn the new skills they need, not just for a particular job, but for a lifetime."

The EDP, which is specifically designed for adults (the average age of EDP graduates is 37), is a counterpart to GED programs. Both are overseen by the American Council on Education. The EDP, which unlike the GED is not a timed test, allows adults to demonstrate to an evaluator that they possess the skills and knowledge of a high school graduate. Glenn Scott Davis, training director for the Hospital League/1199 Training and Upgrading Fund at 1199/SEIU Health and Human Service Employees Union, says the EDP has a high success rate because "it involves the students more; it encourages them more and it builds their confidence." Scott describes the EDP as challenging because it involves home-life skills, civic activism and library research focusing on health, community and consumer issues.

The deep personal pride and opportunities afforded workers who complete high school equivalency programs are reason enough for labor's strong support. The added benefits of education for our unions, our communities and our nation are apparent. As President John Kennedy said, "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education."

-Arlee C. Green



Union Book Project a Best Seller

ost public libraries stock a limited number of books on the union movement-and often the few labor books on the shelves are so dated

> they would never find their way into a student's term paper. But in Seattle and King County, Wash., a strategic union fund-raising effort is about to change that.

Earlier this year, billionaire Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft and owner of the Portland Trailblazers, Seattle Seahawks and other enterprises, donated \$2 million to the Seattle Public Library Foundation to be used as dollar-for-dollar matching funds. After taking stock of the labor books available in the giant library system—only 100 published in this decade-Professional and Technical Engineers Local 17 asked the city if area unions could join the matching funds program. The Labor and Democracy Book Project opened its first

chapter on Labor Day.

"We have to get our members involved in this," says Brian Rainville, Local 17 communications director. "Unions are the most democratic of organizations; unions and democracy are linked.'

In its first month, the book project raised more than \$5,000 in donations from 14 local unions. Carpenters Local 131 pitched in \$1 per member-a total of \$2,100. Ron Forest, Local 131 president, points out that the library project will ensure that information on unions is available to the public. "If we aren't telling our story, we're letting somebody else tell it for us," he says.

Rainville, project coordinator, says any local union can set up a similar project, even without matching funds. "Just contact the library and work out a deal," he says. "If you donate enough books, perhaps you could get your own shelf or section with a little plaque letting the public know who donated the books." Each book donated in Seattle will note that it came from the Labor and Democracy Book Project.

IFPTE seeks to raise enough funds to set up an endowment so books can be purchased every year for the library. For more information on the project or to make a donation, call Rainville at 206-328-7321.

of its loyal customers," Rankin

Call or write August Busch III,

company chairman and president,

people who helped build his com-

American-made bottles. Anheuser-

Busch Co., Inc., One Busch Place, St. Louis, Mo. 63118-1852;

to remind him that the working

pany and buy his products want

their American-made beer in

1-800-342-5283.

UNION SQUARE

or more than a century, Union Square Park in Manhattan, the site of America's first Labor Day parade on Sept. 5, 1882, has been the site of worker gatherings, from parades to protests. That history was honored Sept. 12 when the threeblock park became one of five labor sites designated as National Historic Landmarks this year by the National Park Service.

At the ceremony, which preceded New York City's annual Labor Day Parade, actor Ossie Davis read aloud accounts of that first Labor Day. A plaque was unveiled that reads, "Here working people express their rights of free speech and assembly, and on Sept. 5, 1882, observed the first Labor Day."

Among the landmark events to take place in the park was a gathering of 40,000 strikers, members of the Ladies' Garment Workers seeking union recognition in 1910. A year later, many of those ILGWU workers returned to the park to mourn the 146 workers killed in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire.

The park's designation as a landmark was the culmination of a four-year campaign by the New York State AFL-CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council, the United Federation of Teachers/AFT, the New York Labor History Association, the unionowned Amalgamated Bank of New York and Debra Bernhardt, director of the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University.

The city is carrying out a \$2.6 million expansion and beautification of the park.

Beer Bottle Brew HAHA! workers comprise the major group

says.

nheuser-Busch—a company that ties its corporate identity to all-American images such as the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team—may soon be selling its American-made beers, including Budweiser, in Mexican-made bottles.

democracy

DCLARKE, OPEIU8

In response, the Glass, Molders and Pottery Workers have brewed up a fightback campaign that includes billboards in St. Louis urging consumers to demand "American Beer in American Bottles." At the Union Industries Show in New Orleans in April, the union sponsored an airplane towing a banner that read, "Anheuser-No Mexican Bottles."

The beer maker claims it cannot fill its West Coast bottling needs from western U.S. glass plants. But GMP President James H. Rankin says the brewer is simply

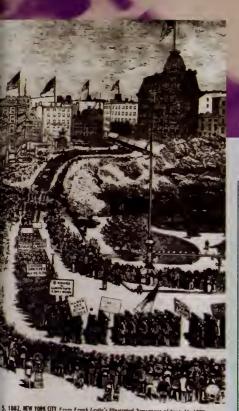
"seeking to profit from the exploitation of Mexican workers," because U.S. companies couldn't make the venture profitable at the cut-rate prices the beer giant demanded. A union investigation shows workers at the Mexican bottling plant earn between \$7 and \$10.50 a day, have no opportunity to join a union and live in run-down shacks and shanties.

"American workers, including brewers, truckers and bottle makers, have helped build the company. Anheuser-Busch must be made to remember, too, that

American

euser-Busch 314/577-2000 RICHARD KLEIN/GMF

On tap: The Glass, Molders and Pottery Workers union is working to put a lid on plans by Anheuser-Busch to bottle its beer at plants outside the United States.



listaric: Unian Square Park in New Yark City, ecently declared a Natianal Historic Landmark was the backdrap far the nation's first Labar Day arade in 1882.

Airing union views: Hast Karen Ritter with UFCW Lacal 56 President Anthany Cinaglia, spansar and guest, tape "Warking Family Matters with Karen Ritter" at Baker Saund Studias in Philadelphia

Workin

Listen up, Pennsylvania. Tune in, New Jersey. Don't touch that dial, Delaware. "Working Family Matters with Karen Ritter" is on the

The half-hour weekly radio talk show was launched Labor Day weekend on 14 East Coast radio stations. Host Ritter, a former Pennsylvania state legislator, includes a nonpartisan, political action segment urging listeners to study candidates' positions on issues critical to working families and to register and vote.

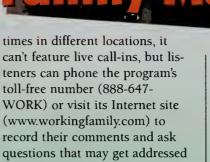
Because the show airs at varying

can't feature live call-ins, but lis-WORK) or visit its Internet site (www.workingfamily.com) to on the show.

UFCW Local 56 in Pennsauken, N.J., and the union's health and welfare fund sponsor the broadcast, and Ritter says the program clearly favors union perspectives. "Why shouldn't working people,

especially union members, have a voice? Unions helped build this country and they are the last best hope working people have for equality, respect and dignity on the job."

In Pennsylvania, the program airs in Allentown, Chester, Coatesville, Doylestown, Harrisburg, Lansdale, Levittown, Philadelphia and Pottstown. In New Jersey: Atlantic City, Trenton, Vineland and Wildwood. In Delaware, it's on in Dover.



UNION LINE UNDER

With the onset of winter, many working families are shopping for outerwear, overcoats, parkas, ski and athletic jackets, sweaters and rain gear. Listed below are brand names of clothing produced by UNITE and UFCW members. Some manufacturers produce their products both in the United States and elsewhere, so be sure to check the label for country of origin.

Parkas, ski jackets, overcoats, snowmobile suits, leather/wool jackets:

A-L: Al Arden, American Jac, American Male, Arctic Cat, Arctic King, Berman, Big Horn, Bike, Brigatine, Brookfield, Cal-Craft, Cal-Crest, California, Calvin Klein, Carhartt, Cindy Collins, Creative, Dew-Line, Drizzle, Don Alleson, Excelled, Fan Club by Majestic, Forecaster, Foxpoint, Fil & Fil, Galleon, Givenchy, Golden Goose, Harley-Davidson, Hickey-Freeman, House of Peerless, Imperial, Lakeshire, London Fog, Lou Miles and Loveline.

M-Z: M. Winer, Majestic, Maple, North Face, O.K. Uniform, OMC, Paoletti, Perfecto, Perry Ellis, Rawlings, Richlu Trailways, St. James,

Schott, Sherwood, Snow Goose, T & B, Tallia, Tough Duck, Unifog, Union, Universal Sportswear, Westwind and Work Horse.

Sweaters: London Fog, Phillips-Van Heusen, Quest Clothing, Union Made and Unlimited.

Rainwear: Spectrum Apparel, Rainshield, Marathon, Commander, Ice Blazer, Contractor, Dry Gear, Tough One, Ranger Tough, Snapper, Sharskins, Winward, Sprite and Canadian,

Gloves: Ansell, Daniel Hays, Gaskets, Gates, Grandoe, Green Mike, Illinois Glove, Iron Mike, Knox-Fit, KWW Cool, Lehigh, L.L. Bean, Northstar, Old Smokey, Old Timer, Paris, Specialty House, Superb, Swany, Tempo, Watson Gloves and Woodsman.



CHASE: PAPER

Finding Corporate Records

nion organizers and bargainers seeking to compile corporate records can find much of the information they need through the Internet and at local libraries (America@work, June and September 1998).

But a thorough search also requires knowing what documents are available in local courthouses and state agencies and how to retrieve them.

Many key offices are in the county courthouse, including:

Recorder of Deeds: Here you

can access information on a company and related partnerships, and check informa-

ESTOPPEL DEED
MORTGAGE OR TRUST DEED

tion filed as part of the company's application for a business license. (If the company's headquarters is in another part of the state, go to that county for the records. If the headquarters is in another state, enlist the help of your international or another local union.)

The office also stores information on property ownership, mortgages, liens, defaults and foreclosures related to the company and its officers. The information will be indexed, whether on a computer, computer printouts, microfilm or in ledger books. Check financial

> statements filed under the Uniform Commercial Code for information on loans and

> > leases. The financial statement is an official form filed when a

company borrows money and includes the name of the lender, date of the transaction

and possibly the financing terms.

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO A LIEN

THIS NOTICE PROTECT YOURSELF

Clerk of the Court: Records involving civil and criminal proceedings are located here. Depending on the state, most of these records are public. Begin by checking both the Defendant and Plaintiff indexes. Make a list of the case numbers, so the Clerk's office can pull the files for you. The case's docket sheet will tell

you the status of the suit and list all papers that have been filed regarding it, including depositions. If any cases have been appealed, it may be necessary to gather records from the appellate courts as well.

Tax Assessor: The location, value and taxes on the corporation's land holdings, as well as those of its main officers, are located in this office. Most tax assessor offices have computerized indexes to speed your search.

Attorney General: Holds annual reports and the company's Articles of Incorporation, which lists officers and directors and interlocking relationships among corporations.

If it's nearby, visit the Federal District Court to check the Clerk's Defendant and Plaintiff indexes. If the federal district court is not convenient, try PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records), a fee-based online service of current court cases. For information, call 800-676-6856. Or subscribe to the more expensive, but faster, Courtlink at courtlink.com.

For more information, check the AFL-CIO Food and Allied Service Trades Department's Manual of Corporation Investigation, which is free to FAST affiliates (\$25 for non-members), 202-737-7200. Also consider attending the week-long course Strategic Research for Organizers, at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md. Contact the Registrar at 301-431-6400.

Q. We borgained a first contract with our employer. Now management is trying to undermine the agreement by giving some of their "favorites" pay raises. They say they can because the pay scale in the contract is the minimum amount for each grade level. Can they do this legally? Has the National Labor Relations Board ruled on any similar cases?

A. Pay rates and increases are mandatory subjects of bargaining. Unless the contract expressly gives the employer the right to raise wages during its term, an employer may not do so without first bargaining with the union. Some contracts may have broad "management rights" or "merit pay" clauses that may allow employers to pay individual employees rates higher than the contract's minimum rates.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Q. We're a central labor council and we seek to build a strong partnership with our community. As part of that effort, we want to offer our members options for both short- and long-term volunteer community service activities. Could you list one-day activities that can be completed with 10 or fewer members participating, some ongoing projects and a project that will accommodate up to 100 volunteers?

A. One-day activities include painting or repair work in conjunction with an agency that serves working families; yard work for a women's shelter; repairing or cleaning up a food bank and holding a holiday party for low-income children. For ongoing activities, try home visits to retirees, delivering meals-onwheels to AIDS or cancer patients and literacy

Examples of large projects are clearing and mowing a vacant lot to create a neighborhood baseball field or cleaning up a park in a working-family neighborhood.

What's your question?

Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@work, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010. Fax: 202-508-6908. E-mail: atwork@aflcio.org

HLLLIU

PUBLICATIONS

A Novel Approach to Union History

This season, tuck a little union history into your holiday gift giving. Workers' struggles and successes are all part of the following pageturning novels:

The Job: An American Novel, by Sinclair Lewis, tells of the daily struggles of turn-of-the-century housewife Una Golden. \$15. University of Nebraska Press.

The Pilot's Wife, by Anita Shreve, follows a woman whose husband dies in a mysterious plane crash. With the help of her husband's union, she deals with the media's intense probing, and eventually learns about her husband's secret life. \$23.95. Little, Brown & Co.

Storming Heaven: A Novel, by Denise Giardina, is set in a small West Virginia mining town where pro-union miners fought for their union against a company that stole the town. It culminates with a showdown between the U.S. Army and 10,000 unemployed miners at the Battle of Blair Mountain. \$5.99. Ivy Books.

To Make My Bread, by Grace Lumpkin, describes how hard times transformed Appalachian mountaineers into mill hands, strikers and rebels, as it recounts the 1929 Gastonia, N.C., textile strike. \$14.95. University of Illinois Press.

The Award, by Lydie Salvayre and translator Jane Davey, is a satire that bares the niceties of labor-management relations at an awards ceremony in a large auto factory. As the executives hand out the awards and comment on the workers' abilities, each worker in turn thanks the company for the award and proceeds to tell how the company has ruined his or her life. \$18. Four Walls Eight Windows Press.

Bobe Mayse: A Tale of Washington Square, by Nancy Bogen, is an historical novel that focuses on the lives of three workers in Greenwich Village in the early 1900s, two of whom are involved in union organizing and in the fatal fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory. \$21.95. Twickenham Press.

KIDS' BOOK BAG

Migrant Worker: A Boy from the Rio Grande Valley, by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith and photographer Lawrence Migdale, is a photo essay about the life of a young Mexican American migrant worker on the Texas border and includes an account of César Chávez and the United Farm Workers. \$15.95. Holiday House. Ages 9–12.

Frankie, by J. Sydney Jones, is set against the backdrop of the 1913 Colorado coal miners' strike, which ended in a massacre that left 15 women and children dead. The tale is about the mysterious past of the orphan Frankie, and Luke, whose family took her in. \$16.99. Penguin Press. Ages 9–12.

Finding a Job for Daddy, by Evelyn Hughes Masiac and illustrator Kay Life, depicts

how a young girl views her father's unemployment and tries to help. \$13.95.

Albert Whitman & Company. Ages 4–8.

The Bobbin Girl, by Emily Arnold McCully, is set in a Lowell, Mass., textile mill in the 1930s and features a 10-year-old girl who begins work at the mill to help with her family's finances. She joins in a protest against the bad working conditions. Includes background on the mill worker on whom the story is based. \$11.19. Dial Books for Young Readers. Ages 4-8. @

AFL-CIO's 2nd Annual Conference for Union Members in Public Office

December 11-13, 1998 Omni Shoreham Hotel Washington, D.C.

The conference is an opportunity for union members holding public office to:

- Improve campaign skills and fundraising techniques.
- Attend briefings on working family issues.
- Strategize on how to advance the Working-Families Agenda on state and local levels.
- Learn from the experiences of other union members in office.

For more information, call 1-888-3-AFL-CIO.

Labor Educators to Meet April 8–11

Forging a Labor-Community Agenda: Race, Class and Gender and the Fight for Economic Justice is the theme of the 1999 Labor Education Conference April 8–11, 1999, at the Atlanta Hyatt Regency. The annual conference is sponsored by the AFL-CIO Education Department and the University and College Labor Education Association.

Union and university labor educators will examine opportunities, obstacles, tools and techniques for organizing in the South; bargaining strategies in a global economy; laborcommunity alliances; the fight for environmental justice; race- and gender-based economic inequality; and affirmative action.

For more information, contact David Alexander at 202-637-5142.

Free Catalog of Union Music and Art

As part of its mission to strengthen the union movement through music and the arts, the nonprofit Labor Heritage Foundation is offering a free catalog of labor music, art, books and videos. The catalog includes Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie and Sweet Honey in the Rock CDs and tapes, Rosie the Riveter notecards, Ralph Fasanella posters and much more.

Contact the Labor Heritage Foundation, 1925 K St., N.W., #400, Washington, D.C. 20006; 202-842-7810. Fax: 202-842-7838.

We will build a broad movement of American workers by shifting resources to organizing and expanding political and community support for workers' right to organize to improve their lives.

We will build a strong political voice

for workers in our
nation at every level of
government by engaging our members,
achieving enduring
gains through pro-working families
legislation and building a solid political
foundation that will last.

We will change our unions

to provide a new voice to workers in a changing economy so they have a say in all the decisions that affect their working lives—from capital investments, to the quality of our products and services, to trade agreements that affect the basic well-being and rights of workers across the globe, to how we organize our work.

We will change our labor movement by creating a new voice for workers in our communities. We will make the voices of working families heard in neighborhoods throughout our nation, and strengthen ties to our allies in the struggle for social and economic justice. We will ensure that our unions and our leadership mirror the faces of the communities we represent, and we will speak out in creative and effective ways on behalf of all working Americans.

Year's estimate of Today's Unions









